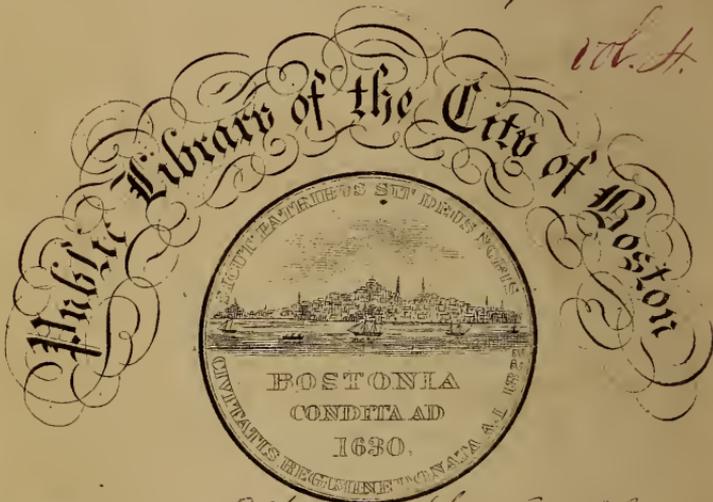


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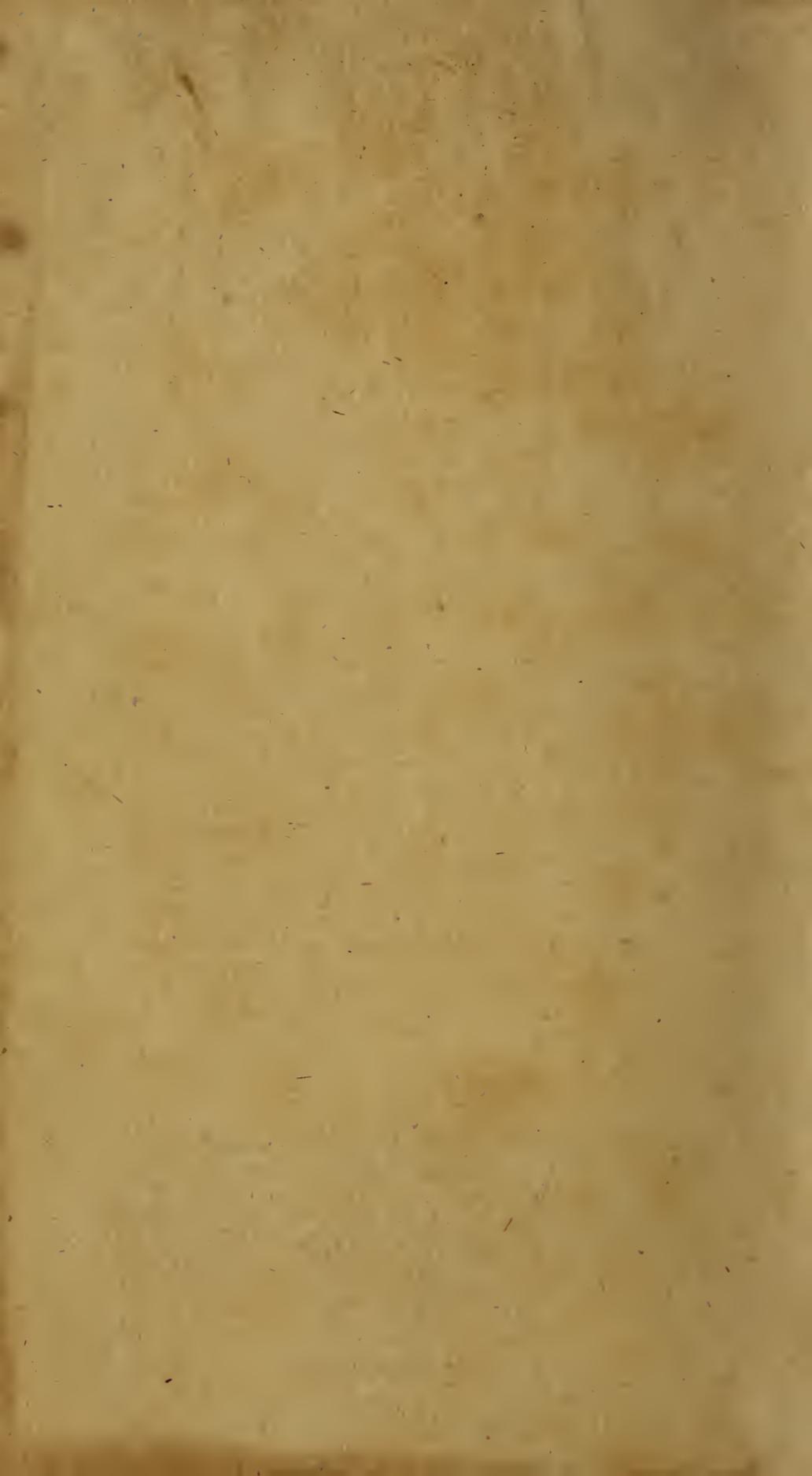
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By *Mrs. M. F. Mason.*

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DISCOURSES

TRACTS and POEMS,

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

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| Wisdom the first Spring of
Action in the Deity. | A Letter to the Rev.
Mr. <i>John Ball</i> , of <i>Hon-
iton</i> . |
| A Charge delivered at the
Ordination of the Rev.
Mr. <i>Haskoll</i> . | Four Essays, on Benefi-
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By the Reverend Mr. HENRY GROVE,
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V O L. IV.

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WISDOM the first spring of Action
in the DEITY.

A

DISCOURSE,

IN WHICH,

AMONG OTHER THINGS,

THE

Abfurdity of GOD's being acted by
NATURAL INCLINATIONS, and of an
UNBOUNDED LIBERTY, is fhewn.

The MORAL ATTRIBUTES of GOD are
explained.

The ORIGIN OF EVIL is confidered.

The FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES of NATU-
RAL RELIGION are fhewn to be reason-
able; and feveral things, advanced by fome
late Authors, and others, relating to thefe
Subjects, are freely examined.

1734.



VOL. IV.

B

THE HISTORY OF THE
LIFE OF
BY THE REV. J. H. ...

DISCOURSE

ON THE
NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE

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T H E

INTRODUCTION.



Find, both from conversation, and several writings lately published, that it is growing more and more into fashion to run down all proofs *a priori*, of the *moral attributes* of God, as well as of his *existence*. Whether the *Being* of God is capable of this sort of proof, I shall not at present inquire. I will suppose that it is not, and that the only way of coming to the knowledge of a *first cause* is from *effects*. But then, I take leave to say, that we are not under the same necessity of proving the *goodness*, and other moral perfections of God in this way, exclusive of every other kind of argument.

That there exists some unoriginated Being, we are certain from the evident absurdity of an infinite series of Beings, every one depending upon a former, yet all of them together independent of any first cause. That this first Being is possessed of all *wisdom* and *power*, we gather from the frame of the universe in which are such numberless and most wonderful displays of both these attributes, as at once satisfy the understanding, and exceed its utmost

comprehension. So far we reason merely from *effects*. But here we shall be obliged to change our method of reasoning, if we intend to have any plain and invariable rule by which to guide our conceptions of God, as a *moral agent*, and our expectations from him. For how shall we know whether God be *just* and *good*? The sober and considering part of mankind, and indeed all whose minds have not been corrupted by vice, or prepossessed by established opinions, have universally agreed in ascribing *justice* and *goodness* to the supreme Governor of the world. And by what have they been led into this uniformity in their sentiments? Hath it been intirely by observing the traces of these perfections in the works of Creation and Providence? Or rather hath it not been because they judged the things themselves to be highly worthy of God, and such as the most perfect nature cannot want? Have they not apprehended an inherent, unchangeable excellence in these qualities, which hath been the ground of their concluding, that God can never be *unjust* or *malevolent*, because then he would not be himself; and that, therefore, whatever seeming contradiction there may be between some appearances in Providence, and the idea of *perfect goodness*, the contradiction is not in the things themselves, but wholly owing to our imperfect views of the ways and works of God? That this, which is the common notion of mankind, and that which most naturally offers

offers itself to the mind, concerning the intrinsic loveliness and excellence of those, which we call the *moral perfections* of the Deity, or their being necessarily and everlastingly fit, and becoming that Being whose *understanding* is infinite, and his *majesty* above all comparison; that this notion, I say, is absolutely right, and that, consequently, we need not search for any other principle of action in the divine Being but that *boundless intelligence* or *wisdom*, to which all the fitnesses and reasons of things, in all their varieties and degrees, are ever naked and open, this is what I have attempted to shew in the First Chapter of this Discourse; I hope, not without all success.

I have only this single *lemma* to premise, *viz. that there is a negative rectitude in the divine nature*; by which I mean, that God hath no wrong bias upon him, no inclination to any thing, which to his *wisdom*, that is never deceived, appears unbecoming him to do. I might content myself with referring to what I have afterwards, I think, proved, that there are in God no *inclinations* or *affections* of any kind, properly so called; and to be sure then none that interfere with his immutable ideas of *just* and *right*. But I add this further consideration, that the *existence* of God being necessary, his *wisdom* infinite, his *power* equal to his *wisdom*, and his *essence* simple and uncompounded, there can be no

room for an intestine war between *wisdom* and *inclination*. We can account for all the irregular desires of mankind, condemned by their own Reason, either from bodily temper and complexion, or mistaken and narrow notions of persons or things, or their having been crossed and baffled in their designs, or from the influence of custom and example; nothing of which, or a like nature, having place with regard to God, it is evident that he cannot be *tempted with evil*, nor by the same necessity of nature (which is a simple uniform idea) both discern that which is good, and be inclined to the contrary. From whence I conclude, that God hath no such *inclinations* or *affections* as oppose the dictates of his infinite *wisdom*.

The Author designs not by any thing he hath said, to make innovations in our common language, when we are speaking of the Deity. He is very well contented that certain expressions, consecrated by long use (such as *decrees* and *purposes*, *kind affections* and *inclinations*, *compassion*, &c.) should still keep possession. Only, he thinks that the old rule ought to be applied here, that what is spoken in compliance with human weakness, must be understood in a manner worthy of God. That such language is popular, not philosophical; fitted to strike the imagination and passions, and therefore used; not such as *mere Reason* would make choice of.



C H A P. I.

SECT. I.



WHEN I examine my notion of the self-existent, all-perfect Being, I find, among others, these two ideas, of

infinite knowledge, and a correspondent *energy*, or *active force* included in it. The knowledge which this Being hath, of what is fit or unfit, to be chosen, or done in every supposable circumstance, is what we mean by the *wisdom* of God. These fitnesses and unfitnesses, are distinguished into natural and moral. *Natural fitness* is (chiefly at least) the fitness or subserviency of things and actions in their own nature, to some good end. *Moral fitness* is the fitness or congruity, that intelligent and free agents should make choice of certain ends preferably to others, and of certain actions, as means suited and adapted to these ends. That there are different moral kinds of action, some

fit, others unfit to be done, some becoming, others unbecoming the supreme Being, and this independently of his chusing or willing them, is as evident, as that there are moral perfections and excellencies belonging to the divine nature.

SECT. II. The *will* of God constantly to act after this or that manner, cannot be esteemed an excellence, if, on supposition, he had *willed* to act in a different and contrary way, the former manner would have had nothing great and excellent in it. The excellence or dignity, must be first in one way and method of acting above another, and from thence be transferred to the *will*, which, being steddily and complacentially determined that way, is therefore said to have a *rectitude* in it, or to be *holy* and *just* and *good*. Otherwise the meaning and proof of God's moral perfections would be no more than this, that he *wills* what he *wills*, and *doth* every thing he *doth*; because his *willing* or *doing* it, makes that a perfection or excellence, which in its own nature is absolutely indifferent.

SECT. III. The *wisdom* of God is primarily conversant about ends, and secondarily only about the means. All ends are not morally indifferent, till God, by his arbitrary choice, establishes a difference between them. *e. g.* It is not a thing indifferent, whether the
end

end proposed by God in creating intelligent Beings, *shall be the display of his sovereign and uncontroulable power in their everlasting misery, without the least thing done by them to deserve it; raising their expectations by express and solemn promises, and then disappointing them;* whether God shall propose this as his end in their creation, or somewhat else, is not, I say, a thing morally indifferent. The sun in the heavens is not more visible by its own light, than the truth of this maxim, *that whoever knowingly and wilfully hurts another without cause, is guilty of injustice;* and the greater the hurt, the greater the injustice. What is without cause, or reason is without right, and what is without right in the present case, is contrary to it, even to that right which every Being hath, not to suffer those evils which no other Being hath a right to inflict. Now can any thing be more dreadful to the sufferer than *eternal misery?* Or more without a cause or reason, when he is able to plead his innocence? Such a proceeding would be at an infinite distance from all right, and therefore infinitely unworthy of the most excellent nature. To be taken out of a state of non-existence, and immediately condemn'd to a state of everlasting torment, much more after a life of the most exact obedience and submission to its Maker, is what the creature might justly complain of; and still more, if there was the security of a promise on God's

part of a contrary treatment. Let any one, for argument's sake, make this his own case, and then say, whether he should not think himself to have just matter of complaint; and then let him consider further, whether the complaint being just, the thing complain'd of can be just too. So far then we are got, *that there is an essential-everlasting fitness in justice, and faithfulness.*—Let us now see whether we cannot advance further.

SECT. IV. Nothing whatsoever is of value but happiness, either the agent's own, or the happiness of other Beings; or that which hath some relation to happiness; either more immediate or remote, necessary or voluntary, to happiness itself, or to the capacities of it. A universe of unintelligent matter falling (if you please) by chance, into the most consummate order and regularity, but without any mind to discern and enjoy its beauties, is in effect nothing, because good for nothing. Nor is the case mended by adding intelligence and perception, if that intelligence and perception, be not attended with pleasure; perception without all pleasure, is no better than figure and magnitude without perception, as these are just equal in value to nothing. To perception add misery, and nothing will deserve the preference. From hence I proceed to argue thus — That which immediately and properly causes misery and
not

not happiness, or less happiness than misery, is upon the whole evil or worse than nothing; that which causes neither happiness nor misery, either immediately or upon reflection, is neither good nor evil, and so will serve for no more, than to weigh against nothing. *Beauty* and *order* are, in their own nature, fitted to communicate pleasure to percipient Beings, that are proper judges of them; in the natural world as they are arguments of design and skill in the framer, and lead the thoughts to beauties of a higher kind; in the moral world, as they are the effects of the noblest faculties applied to their right use. When I say that these things are in their *nature* fitted to produce pleasure, my meaning is, that nothing is required to this pleasure, but a clearness of perception, without any bias or inclination, one way or the other. But now, on the contrary, were it supposable (which it is not) that *beauty* and *order* had no more aptitude to give pleasure, than *deformity* and *confusion*, there would be nothing to chuse between them.

SECT. V. Let us apply this to the two accomplishments, so universally coveted, of *knowledge* and *power*; they can no otherwise be perfections, or things rather to be desired than the want of them, than as the Being who possesses them is the happier for them himself, or more capable of promoting the
happiness

happiness of others. We must therefore grant that end to be best for a knowing and powerful Being, in the pursuit of which, his *knowledge* and *power* will contribute to actual happiness, or to the capacities and opportunities of it. Why I add this restriction, will be seen presently. After this manner are we obliged to reason concerning the *knowledge* and *power* of God himself, the supreme and best of all Beings. Is the original design of God in exercising these attributes, the *misery* or *happiness* of his creatures? It cannot be their *misery*, for the reason before given; and because, if this be their intended effect, they are directed to no valuable end, and are, therefore, so far considered, at best of no use either in themselves, or to the possessor, unless his happiness be conceived to grow out of their *misery*; an imagination so contradictory to the notion of a perfect Being, that I presume no one who believes God to be such a Being, did ever expressly and directly entertain it. There is indeed a contradiction in the very supposition, that the *misery* of the creature makes the *happiness* of the Creator. As his own works he cannot hate them without hating himself; he must therefore hate them, if at all, for works done by them; therefore could not hate them before they were created; therefore could not create them to be *miserable*. Besides, what are the works for which God can hate his creatures? If for *evil*, these
they

they might have avoided, and then would not have been *miserable*; if for *good*, or because they have done no *evil*, this would be *injustice*, which would cause as much pain by clashing with his clear and adequate ideas of right and wrong, as it could be supposed to afford pleasure, by feeding a malicious temper; not to add, that the same necessity cannot be the original of malice, and of that right judgment which discovers and condemns the evil of it.

SECT. VI. It is a very ingenious comparison of Bishop *Cumberland* *, “ the greatest
 “ power that can be imagined, without wisdom and justice (add goodness too) implies
 “ no more of *blestness* or of *majesty*, than
 “ what may be found in a mass of lead, supposed to be of an infinite weight; for, as
 “ those who understand *Mechanicks* know
 “ very well, there may be a weight equivalent
 “ to any power.” We might otherwise resemble power, separate from moral attributes, to a resistless tempest, that carries all before it; which agrees with the notion the famous *Earl of Rochester* owned himself to have had of the Deity †, as a vast power, that wrought every thing, by the necessity of its nature. ‡ From
 all

* *De Legib. Nat.* p. 226. 4°.

† See His Life by

Bishop *Burnet*.

‡ The Divinity excels in three things; immortality, power, and virtue; of these the most venerable and
 divine

all this I infer, that the end or design of God in the Creation, must be *happiness*; as to the degree, and manner of attaining it, suited to the faculties, and dependence, and the freedom of his reasonable creatures; or to speak more strictly, a *capacity of happiness*, which must be valuable, for the same reason that *happiness* itself is so. It is fit that reasonable creatures should be made free, that they may freely acknowledge their dependence on the First Cause, and act according to it. And it is fit that the *happiness* of a creature, whose actions are free, should be the effect of the right use of his own freedom. With this only limitation, the *happiness* of his creatures must always be designed by the Creator. The fitness of *punishment* is deducible from what hath been now said of *happiness*, and is not to be explained in any other way. For, because *happiness* hath enough in its idea, to awaken the active powers of an intelligent Being; because it is very plain, wherein the *happiness* of such a Being must principally consist, even in the satisfaction of its largest and most exalted faculties, and that the only means conducing to such a *happiness*, is the love and practice of universal goodness, which is the
 immediate

divine is virtue. For the elements and vacuum have immortality; earthquakes, thunders, storms and torrents have great power; but as for justice and equity, nothing participates thereof, except what is divine. *Plutarch's Life of Aristides. vid. loc.*

immediate source of very great pleasure to a well-disposed mind : and because further, it is in the power of this Being, to use these means with success, therefore it is fit, that this Being should exert his faculties in an agreeable course of actions, and that, if he does not, he should be punished with the loss of that *happiness* which he neglects and despises.

SECT. VII. The sum is — *That a reasonable creature should not be made miserable, before he hath deserved it, is the first and most apparent fitness; that he should be made for happiness is the next; the next to which is, that every reasonable Being should be obliged to choose Reason for his guide in the search of happiness; which is followed with a fourth, that he who will not be persuaded to take the right way to be happy, should be left to the consequences of his own wrong choice.* But then the fitness that this or that particular person should be punished with the loss of *happiness*, is only accidental, and beside the primary design of God, and therefore wholly to be ascribed to the creature's own perverseness.

SECT. VIII. Another argument for fitness, in the choice of the end, is, that if there were no fitnesses but with relation to the means, after God had first fixed his end, then what we call the *moral perfections* of God, (e. g. *justice, goodness, and truth*) are only so
many

many *inclinations*, *propensions*, or *affections* in the Divine Nature, to certain ways of acting, (or, if you please, *one inclination* branching itself into several streams) not flowing from his *wisdom*, but immediately from the same *original proper necessity* as that of his being *eternal* and *immense*. Now should we grant *affections* in God answering to *inclinations* of *instinct* in mankind, yet it cannot be known what they are, unless answerable fitnesses of action, arising from the natures and essences of things, be presupposed, and it be further determined what those fitnesses are. Then, indeed, *necessity* being a uniform self-consistent thing, the necessary *propensions* and *affections* of the Divine Being, if there are any such, must fall in with the natures of things, which are founded in the same *necessity*. On the contrary; deny any such antecedent fitnesses, and you leave no possible way of knowing, with any certainty, what the *propensions* of the self-existent nature are; the mere agreement of *actions* to his *inclinations*, whatever these *inclinations*, or those *actions* be, making them to be good and eligible. It must therefore, after all the assurances which God hath given, or can give us, whether from the frame of the world, or by a supervening revelation, that he is so and so disposed towards us, and intends to do, or obliges himself to do this and that for us; it must, I say, after all this, remain uncertain, whether he is so kindly *affectioned* as he declares,

clares, and will do as he promises; if so be a false declaration of his *affection* and *intention*, or a manifest breach of *promise* have nothing in them unworthy of the Deity; or only as they would be contradictory to his *inclination*; for how do I, how shall I know that he is so *inclined*? Or, that if he be so at present, the stream will not change its course, and his *inclination* turn to another point? In which case, what was before unworthy of him, will become highly worthy. The result is, admitting such *antecedent affections*, yet the moral fitness, or unfitness of actions cannot be the effect of their agreement or disagreement with these *affections*, but is an inseparable adjunct to the nature of things; between which and the supposed *affections* there will be a harmony and conspiracy, as being both resolvable into the same absolute necessity.

SECT. IX. We have had attempts to prove the *goodness* of God, as it signifies (in some mens idea of it) *a kind inclination or principle of benevolence in the Deity, without any reason for it*; but I think, much short of the mark. A certain Writer *, to the question, *Why do you suppose God to be good rather than otherwise?* Answers, “ Because I can prove
 “ him so *a posteriori*, or by ascending from
 “ *effect* to *cause*. That this is an attribute of

* An Essay on moral obligation, p. 16, &c.

“ the Deity, appears from the works of the
 “ Creation, which is evidently contrived for
 “ the good of the whole, or so as to mani-
 “ fest, that the design of the Creator therein
 “ must be to communicate happiness.” Not
 to put this Gentleman in mind of the *evil*,
 both *natural* and *moral*, that is in the world,
 which hath driven some into the absurd sup-
 position of two first principles of things, one
 good, the other evil, and which must, at
 best, exceedingly weaken this argument for
 the *goodness* of God *a posteriori*, when it rests
 upon this foot, and there is supposed to be
 nothing in the idea of *goodness* itself, which
 implies it to be a perfection: not to dwell
 upon this, I shall only observe, that no con-
 clusion can be drawn from *effects* in the pre-
 sent case, because the phænomena which we
 have already seen are only a part, and it may
 be a very small part of the universal plan,
 which God hath laid in his own thoughts;
 so that the ultimate design, for aught we
 know, may be the *final misery* of all percep-
 tive Beings, to be introduced by contrary
 appearances, that it may be the more surpris-
 ing, and the more sensibly felt when it comes;
 or the predominant *affection* in God, may be
 the love of variety, which, in the course of
 ages, will produce a thousand alterations in
 the universe, happiness being sometimes pre-
 pollent, at other times misery. If from our
 ideas of *truth* and *goodness*, we cannot be
 sure

sure that there is any thing in the nature of these attributes, that should give them the preheminance to *falsehood* and *cruelty*, then we cannot be sure but this or any other may be the scheme projected, forasmuch as we have seen so little of it, to be able to argue from *effects*, if we have nothing to assist and guide our reasonings in the absolute nature and fitness of things.

SECT. X. “ But ” (says another Author *, who espouses the same notion, tho’ to a very different purpose) “ some things are
 “ necessarily pleasing or displeasing, and that
 “ which makes them so, is the relation there
 “ is in the nature of the thing between the
 “ object and the mind perceiving ; what is
 “ the result of this relation in most cases, we
 “ know not but by experience ; yet this I
 “ think we may be sure of, that certain
 “ things are in their nature incapable of being
 “ the foundation of pleasure ; of which kind
 “ I take *malevolence* to be.” If by the relation in the nature of the things between the object and the mind perceiving, this Author meant the relation between the *object* and *judging faculty*, I intirely agree with him in his account of mental pleasure and pain. But this he could not mean consistently with his own hypothesis ; because when an object gives pleasure or pain, not by immediate and simple

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* Two Letters from a *Deist* to his Friend, p. 33.

perception, but after reasoning or making a judgment about it, it is for some apprehended fitness or unfitness in the object, to which we have, or have not, had regard in our conduct. And as to any other relation between an object and such a mind as the supreme, it is absolutely unconceivable; and, were it granted, would prove that *malevolence* might be natural and necessary, as well as any other affection, and afford as much pleasure in the gratification. The gratifying of any inclination is pleasant, and that the pleasure is sometimes over-paid for, is because it is condemned by Reason; as its being condemned by Reason is, because Reason judges it to be criminal or foolish. A beast of rapacious kind tears its prey in pieces, and feels no remorse after it hath done; and the chief of intelligent Beings might in like manner delight in sacrificing millions of innocent creatures to a cruel temper, without having the pleasure in the least abated, by the knowledge of what these wretched Beings undeservedly suffered, could it be supposed that one reasonable Being hath no concern in the happiness or misery of another, but as it affects his own; and setting aside that connexion, cannot be blamed for refusing to do the most easy action, in order to remove an unsupportable load of misery, from a great number of innocent and virtuous Beings, or even for doing all in its power, to lay such a load of misery upon them.

SECT. XI. Upon the whole, were it so, as these two Writers, one of them a *Christian*, the other a *Deist*, say, that in point of moral excellence, there is no difference between *goodness* and *malice*, so that all the assurance we have that God is *good*, or hath an *inclination to do good*, is from the *effects*. Were this a true account of things, I should think we were upon a very precarious bottom, and had nothing at all to trust to, whether in the *phænomena* of nature, or the *promises* of the Gospel, since the design in both might only be to deceive us. Would not this be a natural progression? There are no such things as moral fitnesses, therefore no evidence for any such attributes as *goodness, truth and faithfulness*, therefore no way of proving the *Christian Revelation*: or, supposing the revelation of the truth of the things revealed, or a Providence that regards the actions of mankind, or a future state, therefore no difference between *virtue* and *vice*, but only as they happen to affect our present interest. My mind would be unavoidably led, one step after another, to this sad conclusion of the whole matter. And how then are men to blame for thinking God to be delighted in those lewd, superstitious, and inhuman ceremonies, which they have introduced into their religious worship? Why might not the character of *Belial* or *Meloch* have agreed to the true God? It was usual for

the *Carthaginians* to offer children in sacrifice to their Gods. The *Historian* * tells us, “ they at one time sacrificed two hundred “ children of the best families to *Saturn*, “ putting them into the hands of a brazen “ statue of that God, out of which they “ dropped into a burning furnace beneath.” And how could they know the impiety of this, if they had only *effects* to argue from, which according to their interpretation of them, signified that their sullen God was angry, and not to be appeased on any other terms ?

SECT. XII. There is one thing I cannot forbear remarking now I am upon this head, and that is, how far a man may be blinded by his attachment to a favourite hypothesis. How else could one of the Gentlemen now mentioned (whose zeal for *Christianity* I do not question, tho’ he be altogether unknown to me, as his book is proof sufficient of his reasoning abilities) have made an invidious reflection upon his adversary, which returns with double force on himself? “ It is easy, “ saith he, to see what a pernicious tendency “ the scheme of independent fitnesses is of, “ from the use that hath been made of it, by “ a late advocate for Deism, whose whole “ book is built upon this principle, that *duty* “ and *obligation* ariseth from the nature and “ relations

* Diodor, Sicul. l. 20.

“relations of things.” Lo! here is another *Deist* who agrees with this Author, in saying that *wisdom* hath nothing to do but with the *means*, and that therefore the *goodness* of God is a pure natural *inclination*, which he follows without all consideration of a supposed reason and fitness in things, which these Writers treat as an absurdity. Shall I now, to bring an odium upon this principle, expose it as *the refuge of Deists*, when they are fleeing from the fear of future punishment? He who first set me the example, could not justly complain of me on this account. But the truth is, I have always had such a dislike to the *argumentum ab invidia ductum*, that I hope I shall never meddle with it. The only inquiry here ought to be, which of these two *Deists* hath argued right from his principles? That the Author of *Christianity as old as the Creation*, must have quite mistaken the doctrine of moral fitnesses before he could think to press it into his service against *Christianity*, is evident from hence, that one of these fitnesses is, *that the creature should obey his Creator, without taking the liberty to question, whether the command is from God, merely because he does not see the fitness of the thing commanded; unless it be a question, whether God is wiser than man; I might have said, whether one man may not be so much wiser, or better circumstanced than another, as to discern an expediency where that other cannot? But now*

the plain tendency of the assertion, *that there is no fitness in the divine actions but what is founded in natural inclination*, is that we shall be left under the utmost uncertainty, for want of knowing what these *inclinations* are; or, if we determine for *benevolence*, we shall be justified to believe, that however men behave, they shall certainly be happy, as happy as they are capable of being made, at last. Happiness, whether men take care to fit themselves for it or no, being the only thing that can satisfy that *benevolence* which is a *mere inclination* of nature; and therefore, where there is not a moral disposition for happiness, God, for his own sake, will bestow it. What hath now been said of the *wisdom* of God, will prepare the way for that which follows concerning his *will*.

C H A P. II.

SECT. I. **T**HE *infinite energy*, or *active force*, which, when I am contemplating the nature of the ever-blessed God, is the other thing that offers itself to my thoughts, as comprehended in his idea, may be conceived to exert itself, in *willing* to do something which he sees fit to be done, or in doing what he *wills*. They, who make *will* and *power* to be in God the same, will excuse
me

me for speaking of them as distinct; since, whatever my sentiments are, I do not pretend to decide any thing in that controversy by this manner of speaking, but only follow the order of my ideas. The former of these I would call *volitive*, the latter *executive power*. I have not mentioned a third branch of the *active force*, distinct from the other two, because, to me it appears very questionable, whether there be any such, I had almost said, next to certain that there is not. Were there indeed any such thing as *inclination* in God, that did not come up to express and full *volition*, nor follow the conduct of his unerring *wisdom*, as *volition* does, but was in order of nature coexistent and independent, this I own would be a third way of considering the *active force*, and require another, and peculiar name, being as easily separable in our ideas from the other two, as *gravitation*. (supposing such a property were really inherent in matter, which I am well persuaded it is not) would be from *actual motion*.

SECT. II. But, in the first place, the *possibility* of this sort of *inclinations* in the Deity is hardly conceivable; for they will have the same kind of necessity as his existence itself; and tho' they lie, if I may be allowed the expression, in a parallel direction with the path that is marked out by his infinite understanding, so as to run on with it, and to terminate

nate in the same end, yet they will not in the least be influenced by it. But now, how can the *active force* be imagined to tend one way rather than another, antecedent to the *knowledge* of God that one of these ways is preferable to the other? And, were this possible, would it really be a perfection? The *inclination* will be nevertheless mechanical for being seated in an intellectual nature, if it is absolutely, physically, and immediately necessary; nor ever the less blind and unintelligent, for being united with *wisdom* and *intelligence*, if that *wisdom* and *intelligence* have no part in guiding the *inclination*, but are only subservient to it in bringing about the end, which *inclination* excites to the pursuit of. And is a blind mechanical *inclination* to be numbered among real absolute perfections; or a proper foundation for all the moral attributes of God? Yet thus it is we are taught to conceive of God by some Writers. The first idea in order (as they range them) is *goodness*, or a kind and benevolent, but undiscerning *inclination*; then comes in *wisdom*, which is instead of eyes to *inclination*, not to guide it in the choice of its end (for to this it is determined by a blind necessity) but of the most proper means of arriving at the end proposed.

SECT. III. That there can be no place for such *inclinations* in a perfect nature, I further prove after this manner. *Inclination* is
founded

founded in some prior perception, *i. e.* there must be some perception, pleasant or painful, that precedes *inclination*, or proper actual *inclination* will never exist. It is so, even as to the appetites of hunger and thirst, which, if any one would think, should immediately arise out of nature placed in proper circumstances for it. And yet it is certain, all that necessarily follows the want of meat and drink, is only a painful sensation, not the desire of meat and drink. Imagine the first man, the instant he was created, to have only felt the same uneasiness we do, when we are hungry and thirsty, and that, while he was in this condition, a chrystal stream had run at his feet, and fruit of the finest taste and colour had hung just before him, yet as long as he did not know the property of water to lay thirst, and of the fruit to subdue hunger, and moreover, was not secretly admonished by any effluvia of the agreeableness of these things to his animal nature, he would have had no more desire to the water, than to the channel it flowed in; nor to the fruit, than to the timber of the tree which it grew on. So that even hunger and thirst, as far as they signify an appetite, or actual inclination to meat and drink, are not the immediate growth of nature, but presuppose a painful sensation, from which the appetite appears to be intirely distinct, by this consideration that there is no connexion between them, but by
the

the intervention of another perception. In like manner the *inclination* to relieve a miserable object is, many times, owing to the pain occasioned in the mind of the spectator by the sight of such an object. And may we think that, analogous hereto, God is liable to *uneasy sensations*, for the removal of which, he is inclined to some particular actions? Certainly, this would not be to think worthily of him. But why may not certain ideas cause a pleasing perception, as for instance, the idea of a happy creature, that owes its happiness to God's free gift, from the pleasure accompanying which idea, there ariseth an *inclination* to produce such a creature? To this I might answer, that the reason why the idea of a beneficent action begets pleasure, is the apprehended fitness of such an action; in which case, an *inclination* to that action, would not be an *inclination* of the sort I am now disputing against; this having no foundation in the fitness of things. But, without enlarging upon this answer, I shall just observe that there is no room, even for *inclinations* that are subsequent to the ideas and perceptions of the divine mind; that is, God does not, having perceived a fitness in actions, feel in himself an *inclination* to them as the effect of this perception. I cannot but look on this as a very odd notion, though, I confess, it is by no means so dishonourable to God as the other. The grounds upon which I deny any
such

such *rational inclinations* in God as well as the other sort, will be explained in their proper place. To proceed therefore,

SECT. IV. Will any one say there must be *natural inclinations* in God, because there can be no exciting reason * to action without them; so that for want of this internal weight, the Deity must remain in an everlasting suspense, or indifference to all action? But to a Being of the most consummate *wisdom*, and unbounded *power*, not drawn aside by *counter inclinations*, what more persuasive reason can there be, than the eternal unchangeable reason, or fitness of things?—*It is fit to be done, therefore God does it.*—Is not this way of speaking more respectful to the Deity, than if it should be said, *he does this, not because it is better than the contrary would have been, but because it better suits his inclination?* And yet this would be the plain fact, if God could *will* nothing that he was not previously *inclined* to, and was *inclined* to nothing but by a necessity of nature; since this would be to make *inclination* the sole moving spring of *volition*. The reason of things apprehended by the divine mind, would not at all contribute

* All exciting reasons presuppose instincts and affections. *Hutcheson of the Passions*, p. 216. 'Tis plain if the Deity had nothing essential to his nature, corresponding to our sweetest and most kind affections, we can scarce suppose he could have any reason exciting him to any thing he hath done. *Id.* p. 239.

bute towards it; for if it hath any degree of influence, so as to bear but a third or fourth part in determining the *will*, it may as well determine it wholly, there being no more contradiction, that the two or three remaining parts which go to complete the *volition*, should proceed from a regard to the reason of things, than the one or two that are supposed to do so. Whatever hath any, though never so inconsiderable, weight, may have its *momentum* increased, till it is sufficient to break the ballance.

SECT. V. It is possible then, for God to act without any other reason or motive, than the intrinsic *beauty* and *goodness* of the action. And if this be possible, then thus it is we ought to think he acts, as well on supposition of a *prevening inclination*, as of none. He will, indeed, on the former supposition, act with *inclination*, but not from it, as the proper ultimate reason of *volition*, any more than on the latter. Did he act from *inclination*, in the sense now explained, or so as that to such like questions as these, *Why does God favour the righteous more than the wicked? Why is he faithful to his promises? &c.* no further answer was to be returned, than because he was *inclined* to it, or because it was necessary for some end (as for instance, the bringing about the publick happiness of the rational system) which he was *inclined* to promote

promote without any reason ; in this case the *wisdom*, *equity*, and *goodness* of divine Providence being only occasioned by the necessary co-incidence of the dispositions of a perfect nature with the nature of things, the dispensations of God's Providence would be no, otherwise wise, and just, and good, than they would be without his *consciousness*, or *knowledge*, of this co-incidence, which is not the ground, or reason of his proceedings. As certainly therefore, as all the ways of God are wise, and righteous, and good, they are the result of *wisdom*, and not of *unguided inclination*. The same *wisdom* that discovers the preferableness of one end, one scheme, one method to another, is inducement enough to a Being, in whom there is the most perfect rectitude of nature, to prefer that end, that scheme, that method in all his works.

SECT. VI. I desire never to forget the weakness and narrowness of my mind, especially when treating on matters of so sublime a nature, in which I would carefully avoid being hasty and positive ; but, after all my care, if I follow the chain of my present reasonings, I am led further to think, that as there are no *propensions* or *inclinations* in God, antecedent to, or rather independent of, his *knowledge* of the eternal and immutable relations of things, so nor consequent and dependent upon this *knowledge*. The progress

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is not from a clear view of what is best to an *inclination* towards it, and from thence, by another and distinct step to *volition*; but, if it be of something which God sees fit to be immediately done, the view of it immediately issues in *volition*, without any *intervening inclination*; if of something fit to be done, but not presently, the view of it is neither followed with *inclination* or *volition*, but only with a *purpose* of doing it when it shall be proper; or, to speak more strictly, is attended with a *complacential thought*, that when the fulness of time is come for doing it, such is the unchangeable perfection of his nature, he shall certainly *will* to do it. I freely own for myself, that I am not able to separate an *inclination* to actions, that are not to be done till numberless ages are past, from something of uneasiness. And, were it otherwise, yet to what purpose should we suppose an *inclination* so long before it passes into *volition*? And I will add, why a *moment* before, if not from *eternity*? That is, why at all?

SECT. VII. It may be proper to take notice, that in representing the view of what is fit to be immediately done as immediately connected in God with the act of *volition*, my design was only to exclude *inclination* from being a sort of *medium* between these two, not every thing else whatsoever. *Inclination*, I think, is evidently shut out, but not such a
joy

joy or *pleasure* as is worthy of God, and essential to his happiness. The supreme Being is, in *Scripture*, stiled *the blessed God*; μακάριος, *happy*; with which agrees the common sense of mankind, that he is as much happier as he is greater than all other Beings. And what is the happiness of the Deity, but the pleasure or satisfaction he enjoys? And of what nature and kind is this pleasure; and where shall we find the source of it? Is it a mere confused sensation of delight, that hath its foundation in instinct and temper only, being without any proper motive to it, or object about which it is exercised? The mind recoils at the bare mention of such an absurd supposition; and yet as absurd as the notion of *blind sensation* in the Deity may appear, it is not more so, than that of *blind inclinations*; they are fit company one for the other.

Shall we say then, that the happiness of the Deity hath its original from *knowledge* and *reflection*? So our noblest pleasures have; and surely then, much more the exalted pleasures of the supreme mind; particularly, from the survey of his own ideas, and the relations existing between them. These relations are infinite, whence results an infinite number of truths, the contemplation of which, in the vast variety of their combinations and dependences, must give infinite delight. Truths merely *speculative* are fruitful of pleasure; how much more *practical* truths, or those

that concern a *right conduct*, whether in God himself, or in his reasonable creatures. The fitnesses of action as they lie before him in one boundless prospect, cannot but be attended with unconceivable pleasure, which pleasure must be heightened by the knowledge he hath, that there is nothing, and can be nothing, to draw him aside into actions contrary to the fitness of things, and that therefore he shall ever act as becomes a Being of infinite perfection. This he knows with the same certainty as he knows the fitness of things; and from his knowledge of these fitnesses, and the pleasure he receives from his knowledge, we may be assured, that God in every instance will act after this manner.

The very supposition that God hath pleasure in beholding these moral fitnesses, shews that he can need no other motive to do what is fit, than his knowledge that it is so. The pleasure he takes in any truth must be agreeable to the nature of that truth; that is, the truth being *moral* or *practical* (a proposition rightly affirming an action to be better than its contrary, or than the omission of it) the pleasure must arise from the consideration of it under this notion. And if God takes a pleasure in beholding what is fit to be done as such, when he further sees that this or that is fit to be done by him, he cannot, when it comes to be thus fit, but *will* to do it, and take a pleasure in doing it. We have here
then

then a double pleasure, one resulting from the contemplation of moral fitnesses, the other from acting according to them, which, perhaps, is no more than a continuation of that pleasure which God receives from the knowledge that he shall always so act. A wise Being hath great pleasure in acting wisely, and in the assurance that he shall act thus on all occasions, and the more wisely he acts, and the greater his assurance of his continuing to do so, the greater that pleasure; and therefore greatest of all, where the *wisdom* is infinite and unchangeable. But then this pleasure is not properly the cause of God's acting wisely, because the very ground of that pleasure which accompanies the divine actions, is his acting in the manner he does, because it is acting wisely, or according to the reason and nature of things as the constant motive of his actions.

SECT. VIII. Upon the whole, I would distinguish what is less evident from what is more so. That *there are no inclinations in God at all, distinct from his actual volitions* is to me so evident, as hardly to leave any doubt about it in my mind. That *there are no such inclinations, as depend not upon any previous acts of the understanding*, is still more evident, and the proof of it more easily apprehended. But what is most evident of all, and ought in my judgment to be out of question among

those, who would think in the least honourably of God, and not give up all his moral perfections, is, That *there are essential and everlasting fitnesses in things and actions, which being perfectly known to God, are the true and invariable reasons of his conduct.*—From this Principle the following *Corollaries* are naturally deduced.

C H A P. III.

First C O R O L L A R Y.

SECT. I. **T**HERE can be no such unbounded liberty in the will of God as some have advanced, who (for what end was best known to themselves) have talked deceitfully of God, and complimented him with an absolute empire over truth and falshood, over good and evil. “It is repugnant to Reason” (saith a celebrated * Philosopher) “that the will of God should not from eternity have been *indifferent* to all things, which are or ever shall be, because there is nothing good or true, nothing to be believed, or done, or omitted, the idea of which was in the divine intellect, before his *will* determined to effect it such as it is. Neither do I here speak of priority of time, since it was not there by a priority of order or nature, *i. e.* so

* Descartes Respon. ad Sext. Object. Sect. 6.

“ so as that the idea of goodneſs moved God
 “ to chooſe one thing rather than another.
 “ *e. g.* He did not therefore *will* to create the
 “ world in time, becauſe he ſaw this to be
 “ better, than if he had created it from
 “ eternity; nor did he *will* that the three
 “ angles of a triangle ſhould be equal to two
 “ right, becauſe he knew that it could not
 “ be otherwiſe; but on the contrary, becauſe
 “ he *willed* to create the world in time,
 “ therefore this is better than if he had crea-
 “ ted it from eternity, and becauſe he *willed*
 “ that the three angles of a triangle, ſhould
 “ be neceſſarily equal to two right, therefore
 “ this is now true, and cannot be otherwiſe;
 “ and ſo of the reſt. And thus this perfect
 “ *indifference* in God, is a moſt complete
 “ argument of his omnipotence. But as to
 “ man, finding the nature of all that is good
 “ or true already determined by God, and
 “ unchangeably ſo, it is manifeſt that he does
 “ the more readily, and conſequently, the
 “ more freely embrace any good or truth,
 “ the more clearly he apprehends it, and that
 “ he is never *indifferent*, but when he is igno-
 “ rant which is the truer or better, or at leaſt
 “ doth not ſee it ſo clearly but that there is
 “ ſome room for doubting. And thus the
 “ *indifference* belonging to human liberty is
 “ quite another thing from that which agrees
 “ to the divine.”

SECT. II. In this passage we find all truth, whether *speculative* or *practical*, (or *truth* and *goodness*) is intirely subjected to the free determination of God. The particular instance of a thing fit to be done is not very well chosen, it being a disputable point, whether it was possible, in the nature of the thing, for the world to have been created from eternity, and the creating of it sooner or later in time being, perhaps, a matter of arbitrary choice. But since the assertion is universal that there is nothing good or true, to be believed, or done, or omitted, but the *will* of God was from eternity *indifferent* to it, we have a right to suppose, that if it had come into the Author's head, he would not have scrupled to say, that *fidelity* would have been no better than *perfidiousness*, *mercy* than *cruelty*, *universal benevolence* than *universal malice*, if God, of his own *free-will*, had not made them better. I am pleased, however, to see these two sorts of truth placed upon the same foot; it rejoices me to hear that the truth of this Proposition, *the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right*, is not more necessary and unchangeable than the *goodness* of some actions; and that nothing could have hindered the one from being what it is, but a power that had the same absolute dominion over the other. Only grant me that moral fitness is as essential to some actions, as the
 property

property now mentioned is to a triangle, and I desire no more. That *there are eternal and necessary truths, which always were, and always will be the same, and could not possibly have been otherwise*, is as plain as that there is any such thing as *truth*; since nothing could be proved, if something were not self-evident, and what is self-evident could not be made so, because then we could not know whether it is so or no, till we had first proved, that it was the *will* of God, that the truth of it should be self-evident. And some Propositions being self-evident, the evidence of others is demonstrative, and so resolves into self-evidence; a demonstration being a chain of ideas, in which the connexion between every particular link, and the next following is evident of itself, or without any proof. That there are likewise *moral truths* which have the same immutable necessity, was attempted to be proved in the *two first Chapters*, and appears to me in the same full light, as that there are *mathematical truths* of this kind. The nature of *justice* and *injustice*, *gratitude* and *ingratitude*, *goodness* and *malice*, *sincerity* and *fraud*, being no more liable to change, than those of a *triangle*, a *square*, and a *circle*; and having the same invariable relation of agreement or disagreement with a Being possessed of freedom and intelligence, as these several figures have one with another. Nor is it a real lessening to the true liberty of

the will of God, that he cannot *arbitrarily* make *good* to be *evil*, and *evil* to be *good*, any more than it is to the *power* of God that he cannot make *truth* and *falsehood* to be the same thing.

SECT. III. *Hobbs* is not quite so liberal to the Creator and Governor of the world as *Descartes*, yet he too talks in a strain that is sure high enough. *A right to do all things, does essentially and necessarily adhere to the power of doing them* *; that is, in plain english, God hath power to damn his innocent creatures everlastingly, therefore he hath a *right* to do it; his mere *power* to deceive his creatures, by acting directly contrary to all the assurances and revelations of his mind that he hath given, or can possibly give them, is not to be questioned, therefore his *right* to deceive them is also unquestionable. And if there be no difference between *physical* and *moral power*, or between *mere power* and *right* (as we have Mr. *Hobb's* word for it there is not) we have then no absolute security that God will not thus act; and how much better, I pray, is the *sovereignty* ascribed by some to the most excellent of all Beings than this monstrous, this boundless *right* of *Hobbs*? For my part, I cannot see wherein they differ; since each, like a vast abyss, swallows up, without distinction, every thing that is thrown into it. In all

* De Cive, l. I. cap. I. § 14.

all likelihood, *Hobbs* had never thought of that absurd notion, or would have been ashamed to broach it, if the then reigning Systems in Divinity, had not given authority to that and several other parts of his wild scheme of Religion, Morality, and Politicks.

SECT. IV. Some of late, who are far from believing *Cartes's omnipotence*, or *Hobb's right*, and would entertain the supposition of God's devoting a world of innocent creatures to everlasting misery and torments with the utmost abhorrence, will not, however, allow that *one thing is in itself fitter than another*; so that, if they abhor the supposition just now put, it is not an abhorrence of *reason* (according to their own account of it) but of *mechanism*, like those which we call *natural antipathies*. The *will* of God they will tell you, is not guided by any such rule, as fit and unfit *. “What is the reason” (saith an ingenious person in this way of thinking) “why
 “ God should communicate happiness to the
 “ good and innocent? Will you say, that the
 “ reason for it is, that such a procedure is
 “ agreeable, and the contrary opposite to the
 “ nature of things? If so, I should then ask,
 “ to what things is such a procedure agreeable
 “ to the nature of? Is it to that of the crea-
 “ tures? Is it agreeable to their nature as
 “ sensible Beings? It is certainly pleasing to
 “ them

* Divine Benevolence, p. 21.

“ them as such ; but this is intirely besides
 “ the question, and abstracting from this
 “ sence of the word, I don’t see but that
 “ pain and misery is as agreeable to the nature
 “ of a sensible Being, as pleasure and happi-
 “ nefs.” But, with this Gentleman’s leave,
 I would ask, how long a *sensible*, and an *in-*
nocent Being, have been equivalent terms?
 The question was concerning communicating
 happiness to a *good* and *innocent* Being ; and
 certainly, in the nature of the things, there
 is a greater agreement between *innocence* and
happiness, than between *innocence* and *misery*,
 were it for no other reason but this, that the
 happiness of an *innocent* Being, must, *in part*,
 arise out of his *innocence* or *goodness* itself,
 while his misery must be wholly *external*, and
 so (if not grounded in a mistake) not only
 suit but ill with his *innocence*, but, like a
negative quality, help to destroy the satisfaction
 that flowed from the consciousness of it ; for
 inward satisfaction may be so equally ballanced
 with outward pain, as taken with that, to
 have no more value than non-existence, or
 so over-ballanced as to be unspeakably worse
 than that. If any one saith, that he cannot
 see how happiness agrees better with *innocence*
 than misery does, I can only wish him a
 better eye-sight. Should this Author, upon
 second thoughts, say, that tho’ there is no
 reason why God should communicate happi-
 nefs to the *good* and *innocent*, yet there are
 plain

plain reasons, why he should not inflict misery, I shall think it a considerable gain to have this one moral fitness granted me, and laying this for a foundation, make no doubt of raising a superstructure of many other moral fitnesses upon it.

SECT. V. The same Author adds, a few lines after this, “ I do not find (I am sorry to say it) any necessary connexion between mere intelligence, tho’ ever so great, and the love or approbation of kind and beneficent actions.” And I, in my turn, am heartily glad to hear him say, that he is *sorry* not to find this connexion not only as his *good nature* breaks out in this expression, but as it is a confession, of which he himself was not aware, of the *intrinsic excellence* of beneficent actions. He is *sorry* not to discern a connexion between the highest degree of intelligence, and the approbation of kind and beneficent actions? Why so? But because he is inwardly conscious (as indeed every man must be who hath not debauched his reason, and much more one of our Author’s virtue and good sense) that such actions greatly deserve approbation. For if they do not deserve approbation, there is no cause for sorrow, that mere intelligence or reason would not lead any one to approve them. But, if they deserve love and approbation, as this Author doth in a manner confess, certainly the same
intelli.

intelligence which discovers the merit of such actions, as the highest intelligence cannot but do, must needs approve them, and delight in doing them, if there be no opposite principle to counteract it, which there is not in God.

SECT. VI. It is a strange question for any thinking man and lover of virtue to ask, but which I have heard some such seriously put, who were very well able to have answered it themselves, *You talk of the fitnesses of things, pray, what are these fitnesses fit for?* If I mistake not, I have shewn before that they are fit to ingage the approbation of the greatest and wisest of all Beings; as, in the *second part* of this *Essay*, I shall endeavour to shew, that they are well fitted to awaken the attention, and to attract the love and esteem, of all intelligent agents whatsoever. They are a much fitter rule, surely, for a reasonable Being to act by than mere *inclination*, be it never so right, which yet is the only thing by which these Gentlemen will allow the *will* of God to be bounded. I cannot forbear asking this new sort of advocates for virtue and benevolence, *Is not one action better than another?* Tho', I know, they will presently return upon me, *For what, and for whom is it better?* To which I answer without any manner of hesitation, it is better with regard to the agent himself, not excepting the ever blessed God. Doing good to those that are good, and to the
innocent,

innocent, is a better work in itself, and better suits the perfections of the divine nature, than causelessly and needlessly putting them to pain. It is a better imployment of that *infinite power*, which is under the direction of *infinite wisdom*, than the contrary; better fitted to yield a reasonable, I should have said a divine satisfaction. Will it be said that nothing can be fit that is *impossible*; but that it is *impossible*, without *inclination*, for the Divine Being himself to act one way or another? Why, placing the thing in this light, it is, it seems, fit that the sovereign Being, having an inclination to do good, should do good, and not evil; and that, in doing it, he should have an eye to the fitness of it. But I argue further, that if one action be fitter and better than another, supposing only that it is *possible*, then the approbation and choice of it can never be *impossible* to a Being that clearly perceives that fitness, and hath nothing to corrupt its judgment, and pervert its choice; which is evidently the case, with respect to the supreme Being. He hath a natural power of choosing, and can actually exercise this power, whenever a sufficient motive is not wanting, as such a motive to action can never be wanting where the action hath an apparent fitness, and there is no wrong bias to divert and restrain the choice of it.

SECT. VII. After all that I have said to prove, that *the will of God is in some sense limited by the nature of things*, so that he can no more *will to do some things* on account of their unfitness, than he can to do others, because he knows them to be *physically impossible*, I am far from saying, that a *liberty of indifference* can never agree to the *will of God*, as some learned men have done, alledging this argument for it, *that God can never act without a sufficient reason*. If there can be instances assigned of things in their nature *indifferent*, in all such instances, the *will of God* must be perfectly *indifferent* with regard to such things. And, for aught I know, there may be things of this nature, and the following may be instances of it, *viz. whether the world should be created in one part of space or another; of such a determinate quantity of matter, or a few particles more or less*. Yet even here, I must beg leave to observe, that, according to what appears to me, the *will of God* hath no power over the *nature* of these things, so, as by preferring one of two *indifferent things*, to make that become better than the other; but what was in its nature *indifferent* before, does in its nature continue the same still. If there was nothing to determine the divine election to that part of space, and that quantity of matter, which he made choice of in creating the world, before the world was created, then that part of space, and that
 quantity

quantity of matter, being chosen, are not now better than any other ; since nothing in that particular division of space or portion of matter, was the reason of its being chosen, and no change hath happened in the nature of space and matter themselves ; space and matter being in themselves the same, whether a world exists in such a part of space, and having such particular bounds and limits, or no.

To conclude — I shall venture to lay down this as a just idea of the *divine liberty*, viz. the intire dominion of the *supreme mind* over his own actions. He who is infinite in power cannot be over-ruled by any external force to do what he would not do, if left to himself ; nor can he be tempted to do evil, by a fallacious appearance of things to his understanding ; or by inclinations not subject to Reason : his infinite wisdom securing him against the first, and his having no inclinations at all, to be sure none that are wrong, against the latter. It is absolutely certain, that God judges every thing to be as it is, and the contrary naturally impossible. That, having no motive to act otherwise, he will always do that which he judges best to be done is *morally certain*, the contrary may be said to be *morally impossible*. So the scripture says that it is *impossible for God to lie*. So we are used to say, that it is *impossible this* or *that should be*, meaning, that it cannot be supposed without the greatest absurdity. And if, in any case, this expression be allowable,
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48 *Wisdom the first Spring of Action*

it is in this ; since we might with much less absurdity, conceive all the intelligent Beings throughout the universe to agree in affirming a known falshood, without any the least temptation for doing it, than that the conduct of the Divine Being, should in a single instance, contradict the counsel of his infinite and unerring wisdom. A *natural power* in God, in its abstract consideration, extending alike to all actions whatsoever, is not denied. But, as it has been very well observed, a *moral action is the exercise of a natural capacity, under the direction of a moral judgment*. Now the *power* of God being under the direction of infinite *wisdom*, and there being no counter-inclination to draw his *will* aside, tho' God acts with perfect freedom, so as to determine himself with the utmost complacency, yet that determination, where there is a right on one side, and a wrong on the other, is as certain as if it was *physically necessary*. Were there no direction at all of any kind there could be no action ; and where the direction lies all one way, the action will certainly be that way. This is not the only instance wherein one perfection of the divine nature is, in the exercise of it, limited by another. There is in God a *vis motrix*, a locomotive power ; yet such is the perfection of his nature, that he cannot exert this power, in regard of himself, because of his *immensity*. There is indeed this difference between the
 latter

latter case and the former, that the restraint laid by the *omnipresence* of God upon his *power* to move from one place to another is *natural*, whereas that which the *wisdom* of God puts upon his *power to do wrong* is of a *moral kind*; but in both cases the effect is alike certain. I shall not, therefore, scruple to affirm, that the most perfect freedom of which we can have any idea, is the *power* which the wisest of all Beings hath to act in all cases as his *wisdom* directs, without any the least interruption or controul.

SECT. VIII. Here I intended to have past on to another *Corollary*, but having met with a Discourse *, published not long since, in which the ingenious Author hath advanced *two notions*, on which he seems to lay no little stress, I shall take leave to stop so long as briefly to examine them. The *first* of these notions is, *That there not only may be, and even are, numberless instances, both in the natural and moral world, of things perfectly equal; but that it is necessary, and of the greatest importance, for the honour of God, and as the ground of our obligation to his goodness, that there should be, and that we should believe there are so.* This Author does himself allow that the *will* of God, wheresoever there is a superior

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* An Essay on the freedom of the Will in God, and in creatures. See Sec. 5. of that Discourse, particularly p. 60.

fitness, is determined by that fitness; and faith, “that for God to act an unfit thing
 “ would be unwise, and to act a thing which
 “ is evil would not be good;” from whence it necessarily follows, that supposing the nature of things to be such, that to an *infinite understanding* there must always appear a reason for choosing one thing rather than another, tho’ God, as a wise and good Being, could not, upon this supposition, in any one instance, choose to act otherwise than he does, yet this would be no manner of diminution of his glory; unless it be more for the glory of God to act without a reason than with one, only to shew his *sovereignty and dominion*. The question therefore at bottom, is about a matter of fact (*viz.* whether the reasons are so exactly equal for choosing this or that in a multitude of cases, that God’s preference of one to the other is *purely arbitrary*) upon which it seems to me of little consequence which way we decide, or whether we decide at all, one way or the other; since God as properly determines himself, when he hath a reason for his choice, as when he hath none. Nor are we less obliged to be thankful for the favours God confers upon us, in one case than in the other. Have I received very great and apparent benefits? Were they designed as such? And altogether unmerited on my part? Certainly then, without inquiring whether God had his reasons for doing so
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much for me as he hath done, or for doing more for me than he hath for another, I cannot but acknowledge that I am under the strongest engagements to love and gratitude.

According to this Author's rate of reasoning, if of three persons (whom we will call *A*, *B*, and *C*) *C* hath been favoured as much more than *B* as *A* hath been less, will not the comparison with *C*, take away from the obligation that *B* is under to thankfulness as much as the comparison with *A* inhances it? Had the degree of favour to *A* and *B* been the same as to *C*, would *C*, who now beholds *A* and *B* below him on the scale of benefits, have been less in debt to the *goodness* of God, tho' enjoying all the same blessings and favours as now, only because he would have seen *A* and *B* upon the same foot with himself? On the contrary, the happiness of a generous mind being increased by company, that which makes *C* happier, *viz.* the happiness of *A* and *B*, ought not, one would think, to lessen his thankfulness.—But ought we not to take notice, with the liveliest sentiments of gratitude, of God's having *chosen* us to be the objects of his distinguishing goodness, *passing by* others? And is not this motive to gratitude frequently insisted upon in Scripture? I own it; and it is what the examples produced by this Author put out of all doubt. But what then? It is to be hoped the ground of our thankfulness is not that God hath *past by* others, but that,

passing by them, he hath *chosen* us, who might likewise have been excluded, for any *proper claim* we have to higher degrees of favour. *Merit* we have none any more than they; and, as for any other reasons, however proper and effectual they might be, to move an infinitely wise God, they do not, by being arguments of his *wisdom*, depreciate from his *goodness*, or lessen our *obligations* to it.

Will they who shall be living upon earth, when the Gospel is become the Religion of all mankind, have less reason to be thankful for this *unspeakable gift* than we have, merely because it will then be a *common blessing*, like the light of the sun, and not, as now, a *distinguishing privilege*? Or is there just cause why any christian nation should be more sparing of their praises and acknowledgements to God for giving them the Gospel, because he hath not given it to them *only*? I cannot help suspecting that such thoughts proceed from the prejudices of *education*, by which a man hath been taught, in order to magnify the *Grace* of God the more, to narrow the *bounds* of it; which is such a strange way of magnifying the *Grace* of God as no one, without *instruction*, would have readily thought on. And if this was the motive to God's making use of this discriminating method in placing his favours, that his *Grace* would hereby appear the more illustrious (not indeed in itself, but with regard to those few, that happen to be

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be the objects of it) which seems to be the opinion of some, will it not be unaccountable that the same motive did not induce him to confine his goodness to a *single object*, that being the way to exalt it to the highest pitch of all?

SECT. IX. The other notion in that Treatise, which I cannot come in with, is, *That where one thing is no better than another before a choice is made of it, that choice makes it better to the chooser; so that God himself by choosing any scheme or mediums, though antecedently no way preferable to other schemes and mediums, which he does not choose, renders that scheme and those mediums fit, and good, and agreeable* *. Here I am apt to think, the ingenious Author deceived himself, or rather was deceived by Bishop King, for want of attending to an obvious distinction, between the *absolute* and *respective* goodness or fitness of two or more schemes or mediums, which lie before the view of an intelligent agent. The *absolute* goodness of any scheme is that which makes it fit to be chosen, if there be no superior reason against it. The *respective* goodness is its eligibleness above other schemes, that is, the *excess* of its *absolute* goodness above theirs. Consequently, where the *absolute* goodness of two schemes is *equal*, neither of them is *respectively* good and fit; nor can

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possibly

* p. 86.

possibly become so by being chosen. And what then should make it good and agreeable to the chooser? Upon the account of its *absolute* goodness it may be agreeable; but then, forasmuch as this does not exceed the *absolute* goodness of the scheme unchosen, the plain and intire reason of its being agreeable is its *absolute* fitness to be chosen, not its being chosen rather than another *equally* fit. But the agent hath chosen it, and is therefore pleased with it. What, is he pleased that he hath chosen *that* and not the *other*? That cannot be, if he knows that one is no better than the other, and is not influenced in his choice, by a particular and unaccountable fancy for one above the other; which, though it may be frequently fact, in respect of such compounded and imperfect Beings as we are, cannot, without detracting from the simplicity and perfection of his nature, be supposed of God; not to add, that where there is such a *partial* fancy, the agreeableness of the thing does not arise from our having actually chosen it, but from the fancy we have for it, which is the true reason of our choice.

Second COROLLARY.

THE *divine rectitude* is a complex term, including several ideas under it; as, for instance, a *negative rectitude*, in opposition to every wrong inclination; *rectitude of judgment*,

ment, in opposition to all ignorance and mistake about *right* and *wrong*, whether in respect of the actions and operations of the Deity himself, or the actions and operations of his free creatures; a *rectitude of will*, denoting an invariable determination of the *will* by a *right judgment*, in opposition to a *will* that is capable of being determined without, or contrary to such a *judgment*; and finally, a *rectitude of delight*, signifying that as some things are fit to be delighted in, others not, so God is delighted in that, and nothing else, which is a proper foundation and object of delight, and that his delight is always proportionable to the occasion, and the value of the object, in opposition to a satisfaction or delight that is unreasonable, because misplaced as to the object, or excessive as to the degree. All these are comprehended in the *rectitude of the divine nature*; the inseparable effect of which is a *rectitude in the divine conduct and government*; by which *rectitude*, besides his never doing any thing that had better not be done, is further meant his doing every thing that is fit and becoming him to do. The assurance we have of this (the *rectitude of the divine nature* being presupposed) is the infinite *power*, or *all-sufficiency* of God. He cannot be controuled or over-ruled in any of his designs; to him it can never be difficult and painful to do any thing that is *possible*; he wants nothing, and he fears nothing, and therefore

can have no inducement to do what he otherwise would not, or to leave undone what he should else have chosen to do, only for the sake of his ease, and to secure his own private interest and happiness.

Third COROLLARY.

SECT. I. **T**HE moral attributes of God are only divers ways of considering the will of God, as invariably and delightfully determined by his wisdom, to that which is best in all possible circumstances. The attributes that go under this name of moral, are goodness, justice, truth and faithfulness. Goodness is the will of God invariably and delightfully determined by his wisdom to the communication of being and happiness, because it is fit, and as far as is fit. — Justice is the will of God invariably and delightfully determined by his wisdom to maintain right and order, and, for this end and purpose, to do all that is necessary to convince his reasonable creatures of the regard he hath to the preservation of his own rights, and of theirs. — Truth, or sincerity, is the will of God invariably and delightfully determined by his wisdom to avoid using all signs, in his intercourses with his intelligent creatures, from which they may not only take occasion, without necessity, to deceive themselves, but would have just ground to charge him, with being their deceiver, having a
 meaning

meaning to himself quite different from that which the words, or other signs, he made use of, naturally suggested, and were intended to suggest *. — *Faithfulness* is the *will* of God invariably and delightfully determined by his *wisdom* to make good all his *promises* and *engagements*. — The *holiness* of God seems to stand for all these perfections in *conjunction*, he being by these perfections separated from all society and friendship with false gods, as his people were to be from the worship and worshippers of these false deities, and from all imitation of them in their wicked lives, their superstitious rights and customs, and impious devotion, and upon that account called *a holy people*.

SECT. II. From this general account of God's *moral attributes*, it follows that we have clear, distinct and proper ideas of the *moral attributes* of the divine nature; that, notwithstanding the diversity of the objects, the principle of all these *attributes* is, strictly speaking, one and the same, *viz.* God's *knowledge* of,

* Can the Deity lie by objecting to the mind a false image, either by words or things? — Of what use can a lie be to him? Can he be driven to it by the fear of enemies? Or need it to serve his friends? — There being *no reason* why God should lie, we ought to conclude the nature of the Gods is free of this imputation. God is true in words and actions, is neither changed himself, nor deceives others, whether by visions, or voices, or signs, whether sleeping or waking. *Plat. de Repub. Dial. 2.*

of, and *delight* in that which is good and fit : in a word, that *infinity* may be predicated of the *moral*, as well as of the other *attributes* of God, as we further learn in what sense it may be so.

SECT. III. I. *We have clear, distinct, and proper, tho' not adequate ideas of the moral attributes of God.* I am sensible, this is very disagreeable doctrine to the disciples of a certain *Reformer*, who will not allow that our notions of *justice and goodness*, do at all agree to these *attributes* as they are in the Deity ; in whom they signify something, of which we have only a confused, or rather no apprehension, and exceeding different from what they do when ascribed to men. And, the truth is, as long as they resolve to give such representations of the *decrees* of God, of his *works*, and of, what they call, his *glory*, as they universally do, they are perfectly in the right of it, to take it for a thing granted, that we have no *proper* idea of these *moral perfections* (tho', they would do still better to *prove* it too, if they could) since they must be conscious of its being a desperate undertaking to reconcile the divine proceedings, according to their scheme of them, with the conceptions which all mankind, not excepting those who have improved their Reason to the highest degree, have of *justice and goodness*. And not only these men, but others too, who know
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how to reason admirably well upon the *attributes* of God when they please, have, as often as a different purpose was to be served, talked in the same strain.

SECT. IV. Bishop *King* is the man who hath most distinguished himself on this head. It is true, his discourse does particularly concern the *fore-knowledge* of God; but then, he lays down such unlimited assertions, that no reader can forbear concluding from them, that his opinion was the same of the *moral attributes* as of the rest; notwithstanding his not particularly insisting upon them. “ Those
 “ powers, properties, and operations, the
 “ names of which we transfer to God, are
 “ (saith he) but faint shadows and resem-
 “ blances, or rather indeed *emblems* and *pa-*
 “ *rabolical figures* of the divine attributes
 “ which they are designed to signify. — A
 “ map is only paper and ink diversified with
 “ several strokes and lines which in them-
 “ selves have very little likeness to earth,
 “ mountains, valleys, lakes and rivers. Yet
 “ none can deny but by proportion and ana-
 “ logy, they are very instructive; and if any
 “ should imagine that these countries are
 “ really paper; because the maps that repre-
 “ sent them are made of it, and should
 “ seriously draw conclusions from that sup-
 “ position, he would expose his understand-
 “ ing, and make himself ridiculous. And
 “ yet

“ yet such as argue from the faint resem-
 “ blances that either Scripture or Reason
 “ give us of the divine attributes and opera-
 “ tions, and proceed in their reasonings, as
 “ if these must, in all respects, answer one
 “ another, fall into the same absurdities that
 “ those would be guilty of, who should think
 “ that countries must be of paper, because
 “ the maps that represent them are so.” And,
 in the next paragraph, applying this general
 observation to the particular case of God’s
decrees and *predestination*, he saith, “ We
 “ ascribe these to God, because the things
 “ signified by these words bear some resem-
 “ blance to certain perfections, which we
 “ believe to be in him; but there is as little
 “ likeness between the one and the other, as
 “ between the countries and maps which re-
 “ present them*.” — If, agreeably to what
 that *Writer* saith here of the *fore-knowledge* of
 God, it be affirmed, that there is as little like-
 ness between our *ideas* of the *justice* and
goodness of God, and the *attributes* themselves,
 as between a map of a country, and the
 country represented by it (which seems to
 have been his sense of the matter) I cannot
 but regard it as not only a very *false* but *dan-*
gerous position. Maps are of use to help us
 in conceiving of the countries they describe;
 because, as to the situation and bounds of the
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* Divine Predestination, &c. a Sermon preached before the House of Lords in Ireland, 1709.

several parts of the map one with regard to another, there is supposed to be an exact and proper correspondence between the map and the country; and because, as to other intentions of a map, having seen the earth itself, mountains, valleys, lakes, and rivers, any arbitrary sign will serve to revive the ideas of them in our minds, which we can easily apply to any particular country, mountain, river, which we have not seen. But now supposing the first and only object a man had seen was a map, I ask, what sort of a representation the map would be to such a man? Would it answer the same ends to him it does to us? Of no more use would our ideas of the *divine perfections* be to us, if they were only *emblems* and *parabolical figures* of those *perfections*, and represented them no better than a map does a country; since, having never conversed with the *attributes* and *perfections* themselves, we must be continually and unavoidably blundering in all our contemplations and discourses about them; and should not, after all, know what we were to believe concerning God, or to expect from him, using the words *wisdom*, *justice*, and *goodness*, without any certain ideas affixed to them. Whereas, from the account just before given of the *moral perfections* of God, it appears, that the general ideas of them, are as clear and distinct as of the same things when attributed to other intelligent Beings.

SECT. V. It is very true, as these attributes are exercised and employed in the works of God, we are often at a loss to make a judgment of them, but then we know that the works of God cannot but be agreeable to his nature; so that God himself being *wise*, and *just*, and *good*, we may be confident that *wisdom*, *justice*, and *goodness* belong to all his providential dispensations. As in the *natural world* the *wisdom* of God is clearly seen in the *laws* and *phænomena* of it, with the exception of a few instances, which, tho' we cannot tell how they discover the *wisdom* of God, we cannot prove to be inconsistent with it; so, in the *moral world*, the *wisdom*, *justice*, and *goodness* of God shine out in a thousand instances; and, tho' there are some appearances (more it must be confessed than in the *natural world*) which are not easy to be accounted for, perhaps not *possible* at present; yet we cannot say they do any of them contradict our clearest ideas of *wisdom*, *justice*, and *goodness*, as some cases evidently do, which may be supposed, and which therefore can never be real cases. To annex a greater degree of misery than of happiness to the existence of an *innocent creature* (greater, I mean, upon the whole) is repugnant to the most obvious ideas of *justice*, as inflicting the least degree of misery (tho' it were but as the dust of the ballance compared with the happiness which the

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the creature enjoyed) when it was neither *deserved*, nor *promoted* any valuable end, would be contrary to the *wisdom* and *goodness* of the infinite Being, and for this reason, it is not possible that any such instances should ever occur.

SECT. VI. It is one thing not to see the fitness of this or that apprehended part of the divine conduct, another to see the unfitness of it. The latter only is sufficient to prove, that God is not *wise*, and *just*, and *good*; or that our ideas of *wisdom*, *justice*, and *goodness* are wrong; or that the thing is falsely ascribed to God. But now as to any such manifest unfitness, it hath never yet been, and we may safely conclude, never will be proved of any one thing which God hath done, or which it is certain he will do. Difficulties there are, such and so many, that it would be the utmost vanity and arrogance in any man to think of surmounting them. But then, these difficulties proceeding from our imperfect views of things, are no real objection against what hath been asserted, of our having clear ideas of the *moral attributes* of God; any more than our not being able to give a satisfactory account to ourselves, of some things in the management of a family, a city, a kingdom, which yet may be ordered very wisely and justly, because we have not been let into the secret of affairs, and are unacquainted with
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the interests of the society, and the characters and actions of the members of it, will prove us not to have a proper idea of the *wisdom*, *justice*, and *goodness* which belong to the character of the master of a family, a magistrate, or a sovereign prince; or that, because we are not competent judges of the fitness of some things, there is nothing concerning which we can pronounce that it would be unfit.

SECT. VII. What we are concerned to remember is, that the larger any society, and the more extensive any plan, the less likely is it that we should be qualified to pass a definitive sentence upon the wisdom of the whole plan, or the propriety of any part; since to the latter it is necessary, that we should have all the parts, even the most distant, with which such a part is connected, lying before us; and to the former, that we should be able to take in at once, that plan and all other plans or schemes with which it must be compared, before it can be known to be, or not to be, the best. *Consequently*, as the government of a universe, composed of several worlds, is a plan or design, with regard to us, of a kind of infinite extent, and not to be executed, but in the course of many ages; creatures, like us, of narrow faculties, a very scanty duration, and but poorly situated to make observations, should not be very hasty to reject a thing as unfit, because we do not discern the
fitness

fitness of it, and thereupon to resolve with ourselves that it is unworthy of God, and cannot have him for its author, altho' there be very good reasons to demonstrate that it is of God and not of men. The thing may be very fit, and yet the fitness of it not appear to us; unless our understandings are commensurate to the natures and relations of things, and God can have no reasons for any particular *act* or *æconomy* of Providence which lie concealed from our searches. Nay, supposing we are not only ignorant of any reasons for God's acting after this or that manner, but can assign plausible reasons, why he should not so act, yet we ought to be very sure that these reasons are at least a counterpoise to the evidence we have of God's having really acted, or revealed his design to act so, before we determine against it. If instead of using this modest caution, we peremptorily decree, that such a thing cannot be, notwithstanding the evidence for the truth of the fact is vastly superior to the pretended reasons against the expediency of it, we are guilty of inexcusable rashness and presumption. Whether this is not the case (to make the best of it) when men argue against the truth of the *Jewish Revelation* from the numerous *positive institutions* which it contained, and against the truth of the *Christian*, from its *imperfect promulgation*, may be left to every serious and impartial person to judge.

SECT. VIII. Let me add this further, that no man can be justified to treat the *Gospel* as an imposture, only for the sake of certain representations of the Deity, that pass for *doctrines of the Gospel*, but, after the most heedful examination, appear manifestly unfit, and therefore false. Be we never so positive, and upon never so good grounds, of the falsity of the doctrine, that will be no proof at all, that the Religion of Christ is false, if it cannot be shewn to be a doctrine of Christianity. Is there no finding out any other meaning of the words and expressions of scripture but this, which we cannot help thinking absurd? And is this absurd sense evidently their true one? Nothing less than a kind of absolute certainty of these things is fit to be opposed to the numerous and most convincing arguments of the truth of the Christian Religion, which will come in the way of any one that seeks for them. Better suppose the greater part of the christian world to have been in an error, one age after another, especially if the error hath not been of dangerous consequence to *morals*, (though one would not be forward to do this) than that Christianity itself is a mere fable and delusion.

SECT. IX. 2. *Notwithstanding the diversity of the objects, the principle of God's moral perfections is one and the same; viz. his knowledge*

ledge of, and delight in, that which is right and good. What the School-Divines talk of the *identity* of the *essence* and *attributes*, one with another, is true enough of the *moral attributes*, in the sense now assigned. The *identity* they meant, (if indeed they had properly any meaning) was a *metaphysical abstraction*, quite out of the reach of plain understandings, and holds alike of all the *attributes* and *operations* of the divine mind, which according to them, have no real distinction among themselves; the *understanding* is the same thing as the *will* of God; and his *power* as his *holiness*. And yet, which is a little odd, the same men who with so much zeal contend for this *unintelligible simplicity* in the divine nature, at other times forget themselves so far as to make some of the *attributes* not only seemingly, but really, clash and interfere with each other; while *mercy* is not to be satisfied without the *pardon of sin*, nor *justice* and *holiness* without exacting the *full punishment* of it. On one side is *tender compassion*, on the other an *unrelenting rigour*. It cannot, indeed, be denied, that they have found a way, as they think, to reconcile this difference, by such an *exchange of persons* between the *sinner* and his *surety*, that the *surety* hath all the *guilt* of the *sinner* properly transferred on him, and properly bears all the *punishment* due to that *guilt*; and on the other hand, the *sinner*, united by faith to his *surety*, hath not

only the *effects* of his righteousness, but his righteousness *itself* imputed to him. But, I fear, if it be essential to the notion of *justice* to insist on the *intire payment* of the sinner's debt, the method of reconciliation here proposed falls short of the end aimed at by it, and so must be looked upon as of *man's devising*, not as the *counsel of God*. For (not to urge the absurdity of making the sufferings of an *innocent* person for a *few hours* in any proper sense equal to the *punishment* of millions of *guilty* creatures, whose sufferings being the effect of *guilt* must be of a quite different kind, throughout *innumerable ages*, which is much such another whim, as that of crowding *eternity* into an *instant*; without urging of this) let it only be considered, that to appease the *justice* of God, as they describe it, (not as the *justice* of a Creator and Governor, but *analogous* to the passion of *revenge* in a weak man, when he hath received a personal injury; to appease, I say, such a *justice* as this) the *punishment* must not only be adequate to the *guilt* of the sin, but must light on the sinner himself. *Vicarious* sufferings will never satisfy such a *justice* as is rather a *physical affection* than a *moral attribute* under the direction of *wisdom*. What pleases the offended person, is to see the offender himself smart for his fault. Or, if they will needs have it to be otherwise, will not the consequence be, that, for the same reason that *justice* excuses the
 finner

sinner from suffering *in his own person*, it might, in such a degree as *wisdom* should judge proper, abate of the *punishment*?

SECT. X. But now, as the *unity* of God's *moral perfections* is an easy intelligible notion, as before explained, signifying nothing else, but their being connected together by one general idea, and resolved into one common principle, *viz.* the *will* of God directed by his *wisdom*, or a *wise love* of all that is good, according to the degree of its goodness, and of nothing else; in which respect it differs widely from the inexplicable divinity of the Schools; so this plain and simple way of conceiving of these attributes does at once shut out that *unyielding justice* which some have taught, and that *easy flexible goodness* that hath been dreamt of by others. *Divine justice* will take that way, and observe that degree and measure in *punishing* which *wisdom* prescribes, going no further than is fit; and therefore we have reason to think, unless in case of *final obstinacy*, not to the extremity of things; since the original design of God, regarded only the *happiness* of his creatures, not their *grief* and *punishment*, which becomes fit only thro' their voluntary abuse of those capacities of happiness, and opportunities and advantages for obtaining it, which God hath given them. *Happiness* (either actually enjoyed, or capable of being enjoyed) is the re-

mote foundation of all *moral fitness*; abstracted from the connexion it hath with *happiness*, nothing in the world is of the least value. Any further therefore, than the obligations of the reasonable creature to his Maker, for the capacities and means of happiness, which he hath violated, render it fit and necessary, God will not be severe *to mark iniquity*. And who will pretend to say that this must always be to the extent of its *demerit*? One would rather think, that forasmuch as the only conceivable motive to God's communicating Being was, that he might bestow the capacities of happiness, if the creature hath not made that use of these capacities which he ought to have done, it should not be morally fit and necessary for God immediately to put the guilty creature out of all possibility of recovering that happiness, for which it was originally intended; especially, when the natural weaknesses of the creature are such, and the temptations in the midst of which he is placed, are so numerous and strong, as in a manner to entitle him to compassion; one would not think, I say, if we only considered the reasons of things, that this should be fit; as we certainly know from Revelation that God hath not proceeded with this severity.

SECT. XI. Nor may we therefore regard the *goodness* of God, as such an easy flexible thing as others have imagined it, God cannot

not but disapprove every action, and much more every character, that is *morally evil*; and the question is, whether as it is fit that he should disapprove it, it be not likewise fit and congruous, that he shew his disapprobation? The disapprobation being perfectly just, and relating to the creature, is it not reasonable that the creature should be made sensible of it, that he may be the more affected with the sense of his own ill conduct? And how can this be if sin go altogether unpunished? Or if the punishment be next to none? Or be not distributed by some rules of proportion, so as that the most guilty shall be the most miserable? Which yet we know is not always done in this life, there must therefore be a future state. Nor do I see any necessity of supposing that all punishment hath the nature of an admonition, either to the sufferer himself, whose amendment is designed by it, or by way of example to others. Did the incorrigibleness of the offender take away all prospect of his profiting by his punishment, and we should set aside the consideration of any other being concerned in the example, it seems highly fit that the sinner should be made to know the evil of his ways, and his having incurred the displeasure of his Maker; and that in order to his knowing this, he should feel it. And here it is that I should place the *expediency* of punishment as far as it relates solely to the *impenitent sinner*; not in the

bare congruity between guilt and punishment, but in the sinner's knowledge of his guilt, and the design of his punishment to work in him a stronger conviction of it, and to express the displeasure of his offended Sovereign against him upon that account; that he may be *self-condemned*, and, tho' unwillingly, do homage, in his own thoughts, to the holiness of God, giving him also the glory of that goodness which he hath abused. So that, should we suppose the sinner to have lost all consciousness of his deserving what he suffers, and to esteem his sufferings the pure effect of arbitrary *will* and *pleasure*, not a proof of God's abhorrence of sin; as, on the one hand, there would be no injustice in the sufferings of such a sinner, because they were deserved, so neither, on the other, would there be any fitness in them if the notion I have here offered be right.

SECT. XII. As to *vicarious* punishment, or punishment by *substitution*, the wisdom and fitness of it is not difficult to be shewn in the *only example* we have of that kind; for there being in the sufferings and obedience of *Christ*, taken in connexion with the glory that followed, a peculiar fitness to shew God's disapprobation and abhorrence of sin, and his approbation and love of holiness, *Christ*, by his sufferings, may very properly be said to *have made satisfaction for sin*; that phrase not necessarily

necessarily implying *that Christ hath paid an equivalent*; but only that he hath done and suffered what God was pleased, in his infinite wisdom, to accept in lieu of the punishment due to the sinner himself; so as to require nothing further of him, in order to his obtaining a happy and glorious immortality, but his compliance with certain necessary terms, which the *Grace* of God will render possible to him. God, the wise and righteous Governor of the world, was satisfied with the death of Christ, as a sufficient foundation for a new covenant, a covenant of life and immortality upon the condition of sincere, tho' imperfect, obedience; because he knew this death, with all its concomitants, was fitted to declare both his love to sinners, and his hatred of sin in the most conspicuous manner that could have been chosen for the illustration of *both*; and thereby most effectually to answer, at the same time, all the ends and designs of the divine government. This I apprehend to be the scripture doctrine of *satisfaction*, in which I see nothing but what, instead of offering violence to the acknowledged principles of Reason, is perfectly consonant to them.

SECT. XIII. We learn from hence in what sense *infinity* may be predicated of the *moral attributes* of God; not *absolutely* and *separately* as of the rest, but *relatively* to the
wisdom

wisdom of God, and the *internal energy* of his nature; both which together produce a love of adherence to that which is good, that requires (if I may so say) a more than infinite contrary attraction to overcome it. It is with relation to these, not to the *actual* display of the *moral attributes ad extra*, that we are to estimate the degree of these *attributes*. The *attributes* exist in the divine nature before they are exercised; nor, when they are exercised, must we imagine the *effects* to be an *adequate measure* of the perfections themselves; any more than from the *power* of God, which is infinite, we can infer that the things produced by it are likewise infinite. All the fitnesses of things, and actions, in all possible circumstances and combinations, are clearly seen by the divine understanding, *moral good* in all its excellency and beauty, and *moral evil* in all its turpitude and deformity, the intire and unchangeable difference between them; so that as no reason is to be offered against the one and for the other, none can be offered by means of any change that can happen out in the course of everlasting ages. This prospect of the divine mind is boundless. And forasmuch as God's love of that which is good, his adherence to it (if I may so express myself) and delight in it, must correspond to the knowledge he has of it, and the active force of his most blessed nature; no bounds can be set to this *love*, this *adherence*, this *delight*; nor can

can the *will* of God be otherwise than right in all its determinations. In this sense principally the *scripture* is to be understood, when it affirms *there is none holy as the Lord, none good but one, that is God.* As all other Beings are holy and good only by derivation from God, not originally and independently as he is, so they come infinitely short of him in these perfections, and therefore are not, by the perfection of their natures, absolutely immutable like him. If we consider only the *negative* part of holiness, consisting in an actual freedom from all *moral evil*, or the mere abstract rectitude of the *will*, there is a kind of equality between one innocent creature and another, of a superior order, and between the innocent creature and the Creator. But when we speak of *positive* holiness, or the *force* with which the *will* is carried to that which is good, and the *approbation* of, and *delight* the mind hath in it, the equality vanishes; this, where other things are equal, being always in proportion to the *wisdom* and *active force* of each nature. Take several bodies of unequal quantities of matter, tho' all gravitate the same way, yet their gravities are as their quantities of matter, which is the reason that a force sufficient to stop one, will not hinder the descent of another. We may use this instead of a better illustration of the disproportion in point of *moral excellence*, between an angelical and human mind, and
between

between the supreme Being and the highest angel. The understanding of an angel will be owned to be much larger than the understanding of a man, and the determination for the *will* to virtue in a good angel, to be as much stronger and more unconquerable than in an innocent man, as his understanding is more capacious, and the activity of his nature greater. But what is the highest angel in this regard to the most high God? The *moral* impossibility that God should be unjust, unmerciful, unfaithful, in a single instance, is as much greater than the security which any of his creatures have in themselves, against their being so, as the compass of his understanding, and the energy of his ever blessed nature exceed theirs. The temptation had need to be infinitely strong, to be a ballance to infinite perfection; and more than infinite (which is a contradiction) to prevail over it; whereas, such is the rectitude of the divine nature, and such the extent of the divine power, that *God cannot be tempted with evil* in the least conceivable degree; so far is he from being liable to be tempted to such a degree, as would endanger his acting contrary to the dictates of his all-perfect mind.—'Till I viewed things in this light, I must confess myself to have ascribed *infinity* to the *moral attributes* of God from a sort of implicit faith, or in compliance with the language established, without having any proper distinct idea of what I said.

SECT. XIV. From hence, by the way, I would observe, that *Cartes's* account of the *human will* is not intirely just. “ It deserves, “ faith he *, to be remarked, that as to other “ things I find not any power or quality in “ myself, which I possess to such a degree of “ perfection, that I cannot conceive how the “ same can be greater and more perfect; *e. g.* “ if I consider the faculty of *intelligence*, I “ am presently sensible of its being exceed- “ ingly short and confined, as it is in me; “ and at the same time I form the idea of “ another understanding much greater, yea, “ the greatest that can be, and even *infinite*; “ and for this very reason that I am able to “ form an idea of it, I conclude it to belong “ to the nature of God; and so of other fa- “ culties. The *will* is the only power which “ I experience to be of such extent in myself, “ that I cannot have a conception of any “ greater; insomuch that it is in respect of “ this, more especially, that I bear a sort of “ image and likeness of God; for though the “ *will* be without all comparison greater in “ God than in me, both with regard to the “ *knowledge* and *power* that are joined with “ it, and render it more firm and efficacious, “ and the *object*, as it extends itself to more “ things; yet, precisely considered, it doth “ not seem greater, because it consists in no- “ thing

* Meditat. 4.

“ thing else but this, that we can either do
 “ or not do a thing (*i. e.* either affirm or deny,
 “ pursue or avoid it) or, rather, only in this,
 “ that we are carried to affirm or deny, to
 “ pursue or avoid what is proposed by the
 “ understanding in such a manner, that we
 “ perceive ourselves to be determined to it by
 “ no external force.” But must not the *in-*
trinsic original force of the *will*, bear a con-
 stant proportion to the perfections of the Being
 in other respects? Is a Being infinite in *pre-*
sence, in *power*, in *understanding*? And must
 not the *quantity* of *will* (I beg leave to use the
 expression for want of a better) be answerable;
 so as that we may be allowed to say, *there is*
more will in God, as well as more understand-
ing, more power, more presence? That we
 are not able to form a clear distinct idea of
 the internal force and extent of the *will*, is
 not to be wondered at, since we are as little
 able to conceive what the *power of willing*
 itself is, absolutely considered—As for what
 he brings in proof of his notion, *viz.* “ that
 “ in willing we perceive ourselves to be de-
 “ termined by no external force,” I cannot,
 for my own part, discern any thing like an
 argument in it; for besides that the *will*,
 though self-determined, is not determined with
 that internal spring and vigour in me as in the
 Deity, and therefore cannot be reckoned equal
 in two agents so infinitely unlike; there is
 another thing to be observed, and that is the
 fallacy

fallacy in the expression of *not being determined by an external force*. The *will* cannot be determined by an external force, much less can we perceive it to be so determined, in this sense that we are compelled to *will* a thing against our *will*; yet in this other sense of the words the *will* may be determined by an external force, that by a *superior influence* we may be so irresistibly carried to *will* a thing, as not to be able to *will* the contrary, while we are under that influence. Which very thing shews that there is no proportion between the *will*, any more than between the *understanding* of God and the creature.

Fourth COROLLARY.

SECT. I. **T**HE *blesſedneſs of the Deity is not at all leſſened by the miſconduct of his free creatures, and the ſeverity which this obliges him to make uſe of either by way of correction, or final puniſhment*. For, whence doth the bleſſedneſs of that adoreable Being, according to our conceptions of it, flow, but from the all-comprehending views of his mind, the perfect and unchangeable rectitude of his *will*, and his being poſſeſſed of power without bounds, and a nature not liable to change? Now neither of theſe can be affected by any thing without him. His *underſtanding* is a region of pure unmixed light, that can never be overcaſt with a cloud,
in

in which there is an endless variety of the most beautiful scenes. His *will* never deviates from the rule of right marked out by his *wisdom*; nor can his *power* ever fail in the execution of what he *wills*; nor his *Being*, or any of his *perfections*, decay, or be other than they are. And, as he can never be disappointed in respect of *himself*, by ignorance or impotence, by being not able to effect his designs, or not knowing the most proper manner in which to do it, so nor in respect of any of his *creatures*, by their refusing to do what he would have them. For, if we take the matter right, the *will* of God directly regards his *own* actions, and only indirectly those of his *creatures*. He directly and absolutely *wills* the existence of intelligent and free Beings; such Beings therefore shall exist, nor can any thing hinder. He absolutely *wills* to command these his intelligent creatures, either by the voice of Reason or Revelation, to do some things, and forbear others; and withal he *wills* to put it in their power, immediately or remotely, by the exercise of their natural faculties, or the aids of supernatural *Grace*, to act or forbear acting agreeably to his commands; this is absolutely his *will*, and because it is so, his creatures will be obliged to do, and able to do whatever God requires of them. So far the *will* of God is not liable to be defeated. For let men act never so wickedly, it will not cease to be true, *that it was their*

their duty to have acted otherwise; and in like manner that it was in their power; which was all that God *willed*; he did not directly *will* their acting right, seeing then, they would certainly have so acted (the immediate object of such a *will* being something to be done by himself, *viz.* exerting such a powerful influence, as often as it was needful to secure the event, and would determine his creatures to act according to his pleasure) but he directly *willed* his laying them under an *obligation*, and giving them a *power* to act right.

SECT. II. But is not the happiness of created Beings contingent, depending upon the use they make of their *liberty*? Very true, it is so; because God *wills* it should. The *original capacities* of happiness are bestowed without any condition, but not *actual* happiness. The creatures may make themselves miserable, because the *will* of God is that, if they are happy, their happiness will be the result of their own choice. They are therefore made capable of avoiding misery, and obtaining happiness; and, for this very reason, that they are capable of obtaining happiness, and will not be persuaded to make use of the only proper means for that end, it is the *will* of their Creator that they should not enjoy it. Wherefore, since God always *wills* what is right, and his *will* is never without effect, what possible room is there for

uneasiness and disappointment? Having done all that it became him, both as a *wise and good Being*, to do, he can have no pain from the knowledge of his own conduct, but, on the contrary, must have the highest satisfaction; nor can he receive any pain, by way of *involuntary sensation*, from the deserved and necessary punishment of any of his creatures, because he hath no *mechanical affection*, by crossing which such *sensations* must arise. Indeed, were God inclined to make his creatures happy, antecedently to the consideration of their *moral* character and qualifications, it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to explain how any of his creatures could suffer, and he not suffer with them (that expression of *scripture* not seeming to have any thing figurative in it, upon this supposition, *in all their affliction he was afflicted*) the consequence of which would have been, that *for his own sake*, he would have made none of his creatures *liable to sin and misery*.

Fifth COROLLARY.

SECT. I. **T**HIS will help to solve that difficult problem concerning the origin of evil.—“ If all things as they came out of the Creator’s hand were *very good*, by what way had *evil* its entrance into the world? It could not be without a cause. Was that cause *good* or *evil*? If *good*, how could it produce *evil*? Might not
“ *darkness*

“ *darkness* spring from *light* as soon as *evil*
 “ out of *good*? If the cause was *evil*, then
 “ there was something that was *originally*
 “ *evil*, and so *evil* had no beginning.”

SECT. II. The answer lies plain—That God made every thing *good*, but, for wise reasons, not *immutably* so. He saw fit to make his reasonable creatures *free*, and to suspend both their *future highest* happiness, and the continuance of the *present*, upon the right use of their *freedom*. This *freedom* they abuse, this abuse is a *moral* evil, and productive of pain, both of body and mind, which is *natural* evil. That there would not have been pain and uneasiness of some sorts, and in a lesser degree, while the state of trial lasted, though there had been no *sin*, I shall not pretend to affirm. But then, if there had, yet as this pain and uneasiness would have been only an appendage to a state of trial, and no more than that state, tho’ a state of innocence, required, and therefore we may be confident not incompatible with a very happy life; the condition of *innocent creatures* on their trial, with all its disadvantages and imperfections, would have born little or no resemblance to the present scene of things, in which the evils of life are so numerous and weighty, as in many cases to render it disputable which deserves the preference, such a state of existence (were there no better in prospect)

or not to be at all. Surely, the *primæval state* of man must have been as different from this, as the world, after God had finished his six days works, was from the *Chaos*. The present state of things could only be introduced by some voluntary defection of man from his Creator and Lord, agreeably to the account of things in the *sacred records*. And if *moral* evil must have been prior to those *natural* evils which are the portion of the present life, much more must it be so to all that evil which is *final*, and separate from any good sufficient to compensate for it. *Natural* evil, at present, is corrective of *moral*, or a *preservative* from it, and, by exercising and improving the virtuous dispositions of the mind, may be the occasion of greater *natural* good in the issue. In this sense *Plato's* * reasoning is very just —

“ That if men suffer, it must not be said
 “ that they are miserable, and that God
 “ makes them so, but rather, that sinful men,
 “ being miserable, need correction, and when
 “ corrected are herein favoured and assisted
 “ by the Deity.” But the case is so very much altered, when no good remaining to counterbalance the evil, existence itself becomes a burthen and a torment, or at best ceases to be worth any thing, that there is no possible way, that I can see, to reconcile God's putting a reasonable Being into such a state of existence, but supposing, that he hath deserved

* *De. Rep. lib. 2.*

deserved it by the perverse use of his *liberty*; or obstinate refusal to be made happy. And this, indeed, will effectually do it; the fitness being first proved or granted of God's creating *free agents*. Now one way of proving the fitness of this is from the existence of *liberty*. — *God hath made free Beings, therefore it was fit such Beings should be made.* — And this should satisfy all who believe that infinite *wisdom* presides over the universe, tho' they did not perceive what was the ground of this fitness, about which the advocates for fitness themselves are not perfectly agreed.

SECT. III. “ God (saith one) could not
 “ approve his own work, without regarding
 “ and consulting the order of the universe;
 “ and how could that order have been esta-
 “ blished, or how the system of creatures
 “ have been completed, if no liberty had
 “ been granted, no agents created? Had not
 “ men and angels been *free*, they could have
 “ been no more than *conscious instruments*, and
 “ *intelligent machines**.” But, with the
 leave of this excellent Author, and others
 that talk after the same manner, the true idea
 of *liberty* ought first to have been cleared and
 distinguished before they had affirmed, *that*
without liberty men and angels would not have
been agents, but only conscious instruments, and
intelligent machines. This is very true, if by

* Divine Rectitude, p. 25.

liberty no more be meant than a *self-determining power*, without which, it is plain, there can be no proper agency, and (were it no where to be found) no motion in the universe, but an eternal *quietism*. But that *liberty* which is given to rational creatures as the foundation of their *trial* means something more than this. * It is a *power to determine wrong*, so circum-

* It must be carefully observed, that the *liberty* to be accounted for, is that power which the *event* too often proves rational Beings to have of making themselves *guilty* and *miserable*. So that the thing is not only *naturally* but *morally* possible, and may be supposed to happen without any manner of absurdity. What is the ground of this *freedom*, particularly in mankind? Does it not proceed from the imperfection of Reason, the difficulties attending the steady practice of virtue, and the inducements of objects and enjoyments suited to the appetites and affections of human nature? Let us then only suppose such a *uniformity* in the nature of man, that reason and inclination point the same way, such a strength and vigour that no instance of duty costs him any labour or pain, and that moreover his knowledge hath all the clearness and extent of which it is capable; and, by this means, tho' we shall not destroy *moral agency*, we shall leave little or no room for *moral evil* to come into the world. *Why then is man formed and situated so very differently?* Here is the *difficulty*; which the reason for *liberty* taken from *agency* doth not at all touch. Since there might be *free agency* (and is so, as was shewn before in considering the freedom of the Deity) where there is no such liberty as *this*, which, as it implies a *moral possibility*, and, in some cases, even a *probability* of acting wrong, is, *comparatively* only, a *perfection*, but *absolutely* considered, a *defect*: upon which account I must own the expression of this *liberty being given* is hardly proper; that which is *given* being *directly* a *power*

circumstanced that the agent *eventually* may, and sometimes does, *act wrong*. Now either there is no occasion for such a *liberty* as this, that a Being may pass for a proper agent, or God himself is no more than an *intelligent machine*. The truth is, the only *liberty* required to the notion of *agency* is that of *self-determination*; and such a *liberty* there might have been in men and angels, without the least hazard of their ever deviating from the rule of righteousness.

SECT. IV. “ But it is further argued, “ that *liberty* is requisite, as in respect of “ order, so in respect of happiness, to which “ it not only conduces, but is essential, so “ far that no happiness can be perfect, or “ raised to any considerable height, without “ it *.” Here again, the distinction of *liberty* just now mentioned is overlooked. Were there not a *self-determining power*, the happiness of the best and greatest of all Beings, and so in proportion of his intelligent creatures, would not be so great as it is. But where there is this *self-determining power*, what need of any further *liberty*? Is it necessary to the complete happiness of any Being that he hath

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a power,

to *act right*, attended with a *power to act wrong* from the imperfection of the agent, and the circumstances of Being which he is placed in.

* Divine Rectitude, p. 26.

a *power*, or once had a *power*, of making himself miserable; a *power*, properly so called, or that may, without the least absurdity and contradiction, be supposed reduced into act? From whence then is the perfect felicity of the supreme Being? Not but I believe, that men and angels, having successfully past through a state of trial, are the happier for having been once *free*; not *merely* from a consciousness of having approved themselves in a state of trial, when they might have done otherwise, but from the apprehension they have of an antecedent or original fitness, that they should be placed in such a state. And here, as I take it, the whole weight of the argument rests, which I shall endeavour very briefly to explain.

SECT. V. There is something in the idea of a reasonable creature that makes it immediately fit that he should be *free*, to the end, his virtue and happiness may be suited to his nature. The Being of a creature is *contingent*; for he might not have been; so, therefore, ought the *moral goodness* of the creature to be, that it may carry the marks of the Being it belongs to. The creature might not have existed, or tho' he existed, he might not have been in that state of elevated and confirmed goodness, to which, *by patient continuance in well doing*, he is finally advanced. The creature is dependent upon his Maker;
every

every thing he hath is borrowed ; it is highly fit he should acknowledge this debt, and that his acknowledgment should be so intirely from himself, as not to be extorted by the conviction of his understanding, and the regularity of his will, in the absence of all temptation to the contrary. The happiness of all other intelligent Beings, besides God himself, being the happiness of *creatures*, there seems to be a double fitness, why it should depend upon their own *free* choice, *viz.* that it may be *contingent* like the Beings who enjoy it, and wrought out by those reasonable and active powers, which they have received from their Maker. The blessedness of the Deity being *necessary*, like his existence and perfections, his *wisdom* and *power* can be only employed in promoting the happiness of his creatures, not in contriving and executing means for the accomplishment of his own. Whereas, the active powers of the reasonable creature, as they may, so ought to be exercised in contributing both to the good of others, and to his own final felicity. Thus does it appear congruous, even to our imperfect views of things, that reasonable creatures should be made *free*; as no one will dispute that being made *free*, it is fit they should be treated and governed according to that character. And were it otherwise (that the fitness of God's making *free agents* could not be

be

be proved) yet the thing being fact, we have no reason to doubt of the fitness of it.

SECT. VI. This account of the origin of *evil* from the *freedom* of intelligent creatures, is, I believe, the first that offers itself to every man's thoughts, who is not prepossessed when he is upon this inquiry. And I will venture to add, that it is the only true one. No hypothesis, that hath yet been started, will serve the purpose. That of two independent and contrary principles dividing the world between them, one inclining and prompting us to virtuous deeds, the other solliciting us to vicious ones, one throwing sweet, the other bitter, ingredients into the same cup, from whence comes the mixture of good and evil in every man's condition, one building, the other destroying, one doing, the other undoing; this notion, I say, hath been long since given up as indefensible. The whole frame of nature, and the laws of motion by which it is governed, proclaim the *unity* of the *first cause*; I mean not here a *unity of Being*, in opposition to a *plurality* of Gods of the *same kind*, tho' this be a most evident truth, but a *unity of Perfection* in opposition to two or more Gods of *different moral characters*. Such a vast and complicated machine as this of the world is, in which amidst the greatest variety there reigns a most admirable *unity*,

unity, could not be contrived by any *wisdom* less than infinite; nor actually framed and put in motion, so as to go on from age to age, and answer a thousand most valuable ends and uses, but by infinite *power*. The *wisdom* that is displayed in this great work could belong to none but a *good principle*, since a perfectly wise Being can never judge any thing to be *good* that is *evil*; or that *evil* can ever be a proper object of a free and deliberate choice, or *good* of aversion and refusal; and, always making this judgment, must always be determined to that which is *good*. He knows his own happiness to depend upon it, and therefore may as soon consent to be less happy, or even to be miserable, as be tempted with evil, or tempt any one to it. And if all the *wisdom* belongs to the *good principle*, so doth all the *power*. *Power* without *wisdom* can never be a match for *power* and *wisdom* confederated. The creation therefore, is intirely the work of an infinitely *wise* and *good* Being.

SECT. VII. Shall we lay all the fault, as others have done, on the *stubborn nature*, and *malignant influence* of *matter*? They who believed *matter* to be co-eternal with *mind*, (as most, if not all, the Pagan Philosophers did) might do this with a better colour, than those who believe the *matter* as well as *form* of the world, to be the offspring of *creative power*. But in whatsoever way *matter* be imagined to
have

have come by its existence, it is plainly innocent of the things laid to its charge. *Matter* cannot operate but by *motion*; between which and an inclination or perception of the mind, whether virtuous or vicious, agreeable or painful, we can discern no natural connexion. Nor is *motion* the growth of *matter*; or at any time, as to the *vis motrix*, residing in it, but something altogether foreign and external. And when all the *motions* of *matter* are derived from *immaterial principle*, can the happiness or misery, the good or bad dispositions of immaterial Beings be necessarily tied to certain *motions*? Or cannot the *first mover* impress only such *motions* on the several portions of *matter*, as will have a friendly influence on percipient Beings? Were the body the unavoidable source of evil, why do not all souls suffer alike by their union with *matter*? How comes one man to have a happier constitution than another? Might not that ease and health and vigour, that calm and chearful serenity of the spirits, that smooth and regular flow of the passions, which is enjoyed by a few, have been the portion of all? If a terrestrial body does not *necessarily* hinder *one* man's virtue or happiness, neither can it hinder those of *another*. It is not therefore a *necessary* consequence of the nature of *matter*, that the soul should be subject to irregular inclinations, to violent passions, and to painful and grievous sensations by its union with the body. All
this

this is not to be ascribed to *matter*, but to the *laws of union*, freely established by the Creator. Nor, even now, that these laws are established, is any one *necessarily* vicious or miserable.

SECT. VIII. Dr. *More* * hath a notion that angels themselves are cloathed with bodies of a more subtile kind. And his reason for it is, “ that some of them became evil “ by their own voluntary act. But now a “ spirit purely and perfectly immaterial, “ cannot, he thinks, be obnoxious to any “ stain or lapse; for, being of a nature so “ simple, whence should it be tempted to “ desert its station ?” — Not to examine the ground of this conjecture, I shall, at present, only remark that tho’ *matter* be by the *Dr.* supposed the *causa sine qua non* of *evil*, yet not the proper *efficient*, much less *necessary*, cause of it. A spirit by its commerce with body, becomes *liable* to fall, and by that to suffer, but is under no *necessity* of falling, in which the *Dr.*’s opinion differs widely from that which makes *matter* the immediate necessary original of all the that is *evil* in the world.

SECT. IX. What way then shall we try next in order to get out of this labyrinth? Can we find any other besides that of *moral fitness*?

* Respons. ad fragment. *Cartesii*.

fitness? Or God's having fixed upon the present scheme, because his *wisdom* approved and pronounced it best? This I should think to be the right way. But all are not of this mind. Rather than admit of any original fitnesses in things, by the idea of which God determined himself, there are those who have recourse to a *natural benevolence*, prompted by which the Deity exerts his almighty power in producing the greatest sum of happiness that can possibly be. This greatest happiness of the whole system of rational Beings taken together God *absolutely wills*, not because it is fit, but because his *inclinations* oblige him to it; and accordingly, the sum total of happiness, let men and other free Beings act how they please, will, in the event, be the greatest that infinite *power* and *wisdom* could possibly produce; or (in the words of a late Author*)

“ the greatest of which the universe of crea-
 “ tures which God hath made, is capable;
 “ still supposing that *their original capacities*
 “ for happiness were fixed by his *will* and
 “ *pleasure.*” I shall not take advantage of this Author's manner of expressing himself, when he saith, *that the original capacities for happiness were fixed by the will and pleasure of God*, which, according to the propriety of language, should signify that the *very same Beings* might have been created with greater or lesser capacities than those which God hath actually

* Divine Benevolence, p. 71.

actually assigned them ; from which, if true, it follows, that they were capable of greater or lesser *capacities of happiness*; that is, were originally capable of greater or lesser *degrees of happiness*; a capacity to receive a greater capacity of happiness, being, in effect, the same as a capacity of greater happiness; and, consequently, God bestows upon no Being the utmost happiness of which he is capable. Letting this pass, I shall confine myself to the general notion, which, if some men are not mistaken, is such a glorious discovery as does at once dispel the darkness, wipe off every aspersion, and shew us the face of Providence in its full beauty. Let us see whether it does so or no.

SECT. X. I imagine that in the preceding Discourse I have overturned the very foundation of the theory, *viz.* the notion of *benevolent inclinations* in the Deity, of which his *wisdom* is not the exciting cause or reason, but merely the servant or minister to execute what they order. At present, without insisting upon that, I shall endeavour to demonstrate, that granting the existence of such a *natural benevolence*, it will by no means account for the origin of *evil*. For if all the works of Creation and Providence owe their birth to *mere benevolence*, without all regard to *moral fitness*, why is not every creature of God, that is capable of happiness, as happy as it is capable

ble of being made? Why is there any such thing as *mifery* in the world? Particularly, in the world of mankind? The answer, I apprehend, must be, that *evil*, or rather *a liableness to evil*, is the unavoidable consequence of something which the greatest happiness of man, or the intire system of rational Beings, made necessary. But I very much doubt this is not so easily proved as said. Let them tell us what that is which, while man, or other Beings of a higher order than man, cannot be happy without it, is yet the unhappy occasion of *mifery*.

SECT. XI. It cannot be any thing in the *frame* of the world without us, and the connexion between that and the portion of *matter* to which the soul is united, since these external things might be so ordered and directed by the continual agency of the supreme cause, as to produce nothing but good, and all the good they can possibly produce. I confess, supposing the world to be governed by those few general laws that now obtain, and the course of nature always left to proceed according to these laws, it is hardly conceivable but some inconveniences must arise to particular members of the system. But forasmuch as the supreme agent is not determined by *fitness*, but *natural benevolence*, what should hinder him, being *omnipotent* and *almighty*, from interposing to prevent any ill effects that might attend

attend the natural working of *second causes*? Would it be inconsistent with the *wisdom* of Providence, having settled general laws, to be perpetually breaking in upon them? It might be so, had the *wisdom* of God any other aim besides the happiness of his creatures, as the only way of gratifying his *natural benevolence*. But *wisdom* being wholly employed about the means to this end (according to the scheme I am now considering) the *wisdom* of God is then most of all displayed, when this end is most effectually answered, in whatever way it be, whether by more, or fewer, laws of nature, or by none at all that are so fixed as not to be set aside every time the creature may suffer by them.

SECT. XII. We *christians* believe (nor are we singular in our notion) that there will be a more advantageous state of things than the present, in which the happiness of intelligent Beings as far as it depends upon the *material world*, shall have nothing wanting to it, nothing to disturb and interrupt it. Now what will *at any time hereafter* be, might be *immediately*. Why then is it not? Why is not every thing fitted to give pleasure? And why are we not better formed to receive it? Why should there be any thing injurious to health, or disagreeable to any of the senses? “ It would by no means be a satisfactory
 “ answer, that God may make Beings with
 VOL. IV. H “ disse-

“ different degrees of perfection. That it is
 “ an imperfection in us men, that we want
 “ a perfect knowledge of our own frame and
 “ constitution, to supply which want of know-
 “ ledge in us, God hath affixed the idea of
 “ pain to our nature, which is designed to
 “ give us warning of any thing that might
 “ hurt us. Pain is a real evil, and yet if we
 “ were not admonished by it, we should
 “ never know when our frame was out of
 “ order till it was too late *.” Such an an-
 swer, from the persons I am now debating
 with, would either prove *nothing or too much*;
viz. that in a state of innocence we should have
been as liable to pains and disorders of body as
we are now; and that the just shall not be free
from them after the resurrection. Should it be
 said, that *then* we shall be otherwise framed,
 the question returns, *why are we not so framed*
at first, if mere goodness, or goodness as a
 natural, not a moral, attribute, as leading
wisdom, not led by it, is the spring of all
 divine actions? Must a more imperfect state
 take place first, that we may know to value
 a state of perfection? Is it necessary that we
 should drink of the cup of adversity, to set
 our taste right for the joys of immortality?
 Will these be insipid if not heightened by the
 remembrance of the other? If so, what can
 we think of those Beings who know good,
 but never knew evil; there is at least one
 such

* Gordon at Boyle's Lect. Sermon. 3.

such Being, and why could not that one happy Being have made others like him in this respect?

SECT. XIII. But perhaps there is something in the *frame* of man himself essential to the perfection of his Being, and yet the fountain of all the evils he complains of. Man is a *rational* and a *free* agent; from hence comes his distinguishing happiness; and from hence likewise it proceeds that he is liable to misery. His happiness arises from the right use of his Reason and Liberty, his misery from the abuse of them. But is Reason the natural cause of misery? The highest degree of Reason would then be conjoined with the greatest degree of misery; nor could a reasonable Being, as such, be happy. Or is Reason the foundation of misery? Only by *accident*, or, as it happens to be *imperfect*? So it must be, or not at all. But why then had not God given us (if not larger faculties, which perhaps was impossible, other faculties supposing other Beings, yet) opportunities for improving the faculties we have to greater advantage? And why is not every man's share of happiness in proportion to his share of Reason? Reason alone then cannot be the occasion of misery.

SECT. XIV. We must therefore have recourse to *liberty*, in order to explain this

wonderful phenomenon. Now *liberty* implies a power to do evil as well as good; and he that doth evil freely (as *moral evil* must be done *freely*, if at all) can have no ground of complaint, when he reaps the fruit of his own doings. True, he that *does evil* cannot. But can there be any evil, *moral evil*, where there is no *moral fitness* in actions? No doing what ought not to be done? How can that be *evil* which is not *unfit*; and which the agent is not to be blamed for doing? Nay, how can there be *liberty*, where the *reasonableness* of the thing neither is, nor ever can be, a motive to action, the only *exciting*, or moving reason being *inclination*?

SECT. XV. The opposers of *moral fitness*, must give me leave to implore their help in getting over some other difficulties; as, *Why liberty* (if it be possible upon their principles) *is bestowed? Is it universal? Might there not be liberty, and yet all men be happy, though not in the same degree?* Let me, in the first place, beseech them to inform me, *Why this fatal gift, called liberty, is conferred on man?* * Should they say, that it is an inseparable companion of *finite intelligence*, I do not see how the consequence can be avoided, that no created

* The objections in *Tully* against the goodness of the Gods in giving Reason to man, upon the notion of a God moved only by *natural affections* would be but too just, and, I think, unanswerable. *De Nat. Deor.* l. 3. § 26, &c.

ted Being, much less man who enjoys so small a scantling of this intellectual light, can ever attain to a state of happiness which he is not liable to loose; in express contradiction to the *christian revelation*, that *the righteous shall go into life eternal*; not to be doomed to *endless vicissitudes*. I mention this for the sake of those who will allow the argument from *authority*, when it is that of *Jesus Christ*. Nor does it appear, that there is any such necessary connexion between the *liberty* (as it must here be understood of a power to do good or evil) and *imperfect intelligence*, or Reason. For how easy is it for the supreme intelligence, being present throughout his works, by occasional illuminations and assistances, to supply the *defective intelligence* of any of his creatures, and to guide them, by an unerring hand, in the way of innocence and felicity, the most perfect innocence, the highest felicity. I believe, I may add, it is not the imperfection of Reason, separately considered, that is the foundation of *liberty*, but the weakness of Reason compared with the strength of inclination. The weakest degree of Reason may be sufficient to secure the performance of that duty which it discovers, were there *no temptation* on the other side; nay, is not barely sufficient for this end, but would certainly and infallibly attain it, it being morally impossible that a reasonable Being should counteract the lowest degree of Reason, with-

out any motive or inducement whatsoever. And why is there any temptation to evil? Why have we *inclinations* that are not directly subservient to virtue? Why do not *inclination* and *reason* always go hand in hand, as we christians believe they will in the blessed state that follows *next*? These questions are asked of those who resolve the divine actions into *unguided benevolence*, not into *fitness*, as the original reason of them.

SECT. XVI. Will they say that *liberty* is given (not because it cannot be withheld where Reason is first bestowed, but) because *liberty* is necessary to happiness? It will then be asked, whether *liberty* is a universal thing, so that in the whole system of reasonable agents there are none, who, that they may be compleatly happy, are not made free? And the happiest of created Beings would not be so happy, were their happiness the effect of necessity, and not of their own free choice? But why so, when the *blessed God* is necessarily and unchangeably blessed? They may reply, that the happiness of God, and the happiness of his creatures are of different kinds; that the happiness of the one is therefore the highest possible, because it is *necessary*, while that of the others is the highest they are capable of, because it is *free*. Should a reason of this difference be demanded, I fancy the patrons of *blind benevolence* would be hard

put

put to it to find one. It can be no addition to my present happiness to reflect, that I might not have been happy, unless it was *previously fit* that I should be left to my own choice, whether I would be happy or not. *Fitness*, I own, is a reasonable ground of pleasure. It is a pleasure to think that God has done what was fit in making me free, and that I, as was fit and becoming, have made a good use of my *liberty*. But, without this *antecedent fitness*, which is a thing these Gentlemen will laugh at, I see not why I should be better pleased with the happiness of my condition, for being the issue and reward of a course of virtue freely chosen and continued in by me. Is it any trouble to me, when arrived to my journey's end, that there was but *one road* to it which I could not possibly miss? To be able to go astray is not a thing of itself desirable; nor is the consideration that we were once so, though now so no more, any way necessary to recommend our present felicity, if it was never suitable to our nature, as created, dependent Beings, and therefore fit, that we should, for some time, be left in the hands of our own choice. This, I say, is not at all necessary to give an accent to our happiness, provided we take our estimate of the happiness we enjoy, not from *fancy*, but from *reason*, as all the happy spirits of heaven will do. And therefore, I cannot but think the *Jew* was quite out in his reason-

ing, who told Mr. Boyle *, “ that he thought
 “ *men* owed more to God’s goodness than the
 “ very *angels* do. For, said he, whereas God
 “ without any good works of theirs, purely
 “ out of his goodness, conferred on them
 “ that blest condition they enjoy ; by giving
 “ man a *free will*, by the good use of which
 “ he may glorify his Maker, when by abusing
 “ it it is in his power to dishonour him, he
 “ allows man that highest satisfaction and
 “ privilege of co-operating to his own fel-
 “ city.” Not to observe the great improbability of the *supposition*, that the *good angels* were confirmed in bliss without any *trial* preceding (since the fall of the *evil angels* is a proof of their having been tried) the very *supposition* seems to imply, that a *state of probation is not antecedently fit*, which takes away the foundation of that satisfaction, which the *Jew* fancied a man must have from co-operating to his own felicity. This by the way.

SECT. XVII. This hold failing, will it be said, that all intelligent Beings are not created *free*, but only some of them, for the sake of variety, which variety is for the sake of *happiness*, rendering the whole a more entertaining spectacle? More entertaining to whom? To them who, by the abuse of their liberty, are capable of making themselves unhappy? Or to those, who have no freedom
 which

* Seraphick Love, p. 117.

which they can abuse? The former will be apt to think, that any such variety might very well be spared. Nor can the latter need it, unless that they may be able to triumph upon the comparison. A worthy satisfaction truly; like that of a man who lolls at ease in his gilt chariot, and laughs to see the crowd trudging along by him on foot. It is the pleasure of a *Domitian*, who loved to exhibit his *naval fights* in rainy weather, often shifting his cloke to keep himself dry, which he would not permit any one else to do; at the same time compelling them to stay out the shew*. All variety does not please the *sense*, much less the *mind*, which had much rather have one *uniform prospect*, than a prospect diversified by the absence of something, of much greater importance than a fanciful variety. All *happy minds* must needs be *benevolent*, and, because they are so, must delight more to see the happiness of their fellow-creatures fixed like their own, where there is no reason for the contrary, than to see any of them in danger of having their whole fortune shipwrecked. The Poet †, indeed, hath observed,

*Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem.*

“ It is sweet to behold, from shore, the
“ weather-beaten vessel tost on a tempestuous
“ sea, and ready to perish in a storm.”

Non

* Vid. Sueton. † Lucret.

*Non quia vexari quenquam est jucunda voluptas,
Sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est.*

“ Not, saith he, that we are pleased with
“ other people’s calamities, but to be specta-
“ tors of those dangers which we ourselves
“ are out of the reach of.”

But even this indirect pleasure proceeds from a reflection the mind makes, that their case might have been ours, or at least that our condition is not absolutely fenced against the strokes of fortune. Nor would a generous soul be ever the less happy, if he had no such examples of wretchedness before him; but more so, the pain he hath from a sympathetick sense of another’s evils, being more than equal to the pleasure of congratulating himself upon his own exemption from them. Hath God made some Beings mortal, that others may have a quicker sense of their immortality? Or is the *contrast*, between the imperfections of created Beings, and the absolute perfection of the Creator, that which completes his satisfaction in the infinite fulness of his essence?

SECT. XVIII. Besides the insuperable difficulties which I find myself encountered with on the two former questions, *Why is liberty given? And is this gift universal?* There is this inquiry still behind; *Might there*
not

not be liberty, and yet all men be happy, though not in the same degree? They who have made the best use of their liberty, we will say, are happiest; they who have made the worst use, the least happy. But why may not even these be tried again and again, till they have learned to be wiser? Why must one trial decide their fate? Or if there must be but one trial, and that trial hath issued unhappily, what forbids their being put into a state of inferior but certain *happiness*, in which their faculties being restored to their soundness, and their broken fortunes repaired, they have all the other pleasures of which they were originally made capable, besides those which flow from a consciousness of having acted well in a state of trial; which, by the way, cannot be very considerable, if he that acts best does not what is *morally more fit* than he who acts worst? What room can there be for a state of *final punishment*, though only *negative*, or such as consists in the everlasting absence of any good of which they are capable? Why any punishment at all, when no past evil conduct of the sufferer can render it *morally fit*, if there be no such thing as *moral fitness*? As for its usefulness to instruct and warn others, surely a Being of infinite knowledge might think of some other way as effectual to preserve his creatures in their duty as this, without making one part of the creation happy at the expence of the other. Or supposing he could

not,

not, yet why must some be miserable, that others may be more happy, without any reason for it in the thing itself?

SECT. XIX. Where *moral fitness* is out of the question, a lesser sum of happiness divided among a system of percipient Beings, without a single instance of vice and misery, must carry it before a greater quantity of good, where evil is not excluded; even though, after the subtraction of so much good as is equal to the evil, the good that remains should exceed that in the other case. The first thing that *self-love* prompts us to, is to flee from *pain*; the next to pursue *pleasure*. And in the like way must *natural benevolence* work with regard to others. The first concern will be that there be no miserable object to jar upon the heart-strings; the next to procure all the happiness that is in the power of the benevolent person to bestow. Would it not be a greater satisfaction to one, whose kindness was nothing else but a *natural impulse*, to make *ten* persons moderately happy, than *nine* in a much higher degree, if that could not be done without leaving the *tenth* in the most deplorable circumstances, without all help and hope? This reasoning holds much stronger when applied to the Deity, considered as having a universe of *his own children* to take care of, and supposed to have no rule to proceed by, but *kind inclinations*, separate from every other
 motive

motive to action. A Being wholly actuated by such *inclinations* would be more shocked and offended with the view of *one thousand* wretches, in his family, than pleased with the sight of *ten thousand* Beings that were happy, and hereupon would immediately thus decree — “ Let not a groan or sigh be heard
 “ through the whole creation ; let pain and
 “ fear be forever banished ; not one eye drop
 “ a tear, not one heart be oppressed with
 “ anxiety and sorrow ; let every class of Be-
 “ ings, and every individual in each class, be
 “ pleased, and of the many millions that peo-
 “ ple my wide dominions, not one be found,
 “ who does not bless the bounty of his Crea-
 “ tor.” Such would be the decree, if *inclina-
 tion* held the throne, and *wisdom* and *power* only
 waited as ministring attributes to perform
 what that dictated. And, did the creation
 wear such an universal smile, there would be
 more ground to suspect, that *wisdom* and *power*
 were under the command of *inclination*, than
 there is at present, that such a dark cloud hangs
 upon the face of nature. To shut up this
 debate.

SECT. XX. Were it not antecedently fit,
 that a reasonable creature should have *good* and
evil, *life* and *death* set before him, let him
 that can give me a satisfactory reason, why
 any creature should be exposed to the hazard
 of such a choice. Put the case that a great
 number

number might be made happy, by placing a single Being, as soon as he existed, in a state of *mifery*, would this justify fuch treatment of an innocent Being? Surely no. Let me take leave to fay, it is not a whit more juftifiable to make any one miserable, whatever be his character, for the advantage from hence accruing to others, if there was not an *original moral fitness* that a creature endowed with understanding and freedom of choice, fhould act in one way rather than another. If there cannot be a *moral difference* in actions, there ought not to be a *natural* one; fince, without a *moral difference*, no man, act how he will, can *properly* deserve to be made miserable. — The fum is, fupposing the *will* of God to be guided by *wifdom*, and *wifdom* to be meafured by *fitness*, it may be fhewn how *evil* came to have a beginning, otherwife not.

Sixth COROLLARY.

SECT. I. **T**HE love of God to his creatures is eafily conceivable upon thefe principles. I doubt the notion of it advanced by fome ought to be rectified, as being neither worthy of God, nor adapted to afford any ftable comfort and fatisfaction to the creature. The *love* of God, if they fay right, is his making choice of fome to be the objects of his munificence, while others, and they the vastly greater number, are left destitute

tute of all power to emerge out of that miserable condition into which they are fallen through no fault of their own. Is there not too much reason to say, that this notion of the *love* of God to man is utterly unworthy of him? What does the Deity discover by such a *love* (if it must be called by that name) but *uncontrolable power*, an attribute in which the *best* of all Beings differs not from the *worst*, but only with regard to the *degree* of it? Yes, it may be said, he shews his *goodness* too to his *elect*. Tell me how, if in all that he does for them he hath no direct regard to their happiness, but determines their happiness rather than misery, just to shew his *arbitrary* will and pleasure, not from any pleasure he hath in beneficent actions as such? And that so it must be is plain, since, were it *goodness* that wrought so strongly towards some, as to decree their salvation by an *irresistible grace*, without respect to any meetness and concurrence of theirs, the same goodness, *to say the least*, could not but make the attainment of happiness, or, if not that, yet the avoiding of misery, everlasting misery and damnation, *possible to all*; who can never deserve that misery which it was never possible for them to avoid.

SECT. II. And as this notion of divine *love* is unworthy of God, so it is big with terror and affrightment to the creature, unless
a man

a man hath the good luck to be of a temper to believe every thing, *with reason or without it*, that he is willing to believe. For say that this *love* proceeds by a *decimation*, taking one out of ten, there will then be nine to one against every single person, that he is not of the happy number. Nor, to speak truth, can I perceive any great ground of rejoicing that the *favourites* themselves have, provided they use their Reason, or have any spark of generosity in them, for when they think of the principle on which they imagine the Deity to act, in selecting them from the common mass of mankind, and using so much severity towards others, how can they have any dependence on the favour of such a Being? He that hath no other reason for all that he does but mere will and pleasure, may alter his will without reason. What is there more dishonourable to God in deceiving his creatures with fair promises, which he never intends to fulfil, than in putting them under an inevitable necessity of being for ever miserable? This being supposed no disparagement to the Deity, is there any thing else that can be so? Could a person who aimed to conform all his own actions to Reason, and esteemed it the greatest glory of a Being to do good to all according to his ability, have much satisfaction in the friendship of a prince, who, while he caressed a few of his subjects,

jects, had formed a design of ruining all the rest, and making them feel the weight of his power, for no other reason, but that it so pleased him? To those whom such a Prince should call near him, and load with honours, one might apply the words of the *Roman Satyrift*.

*In quorum facie miseræ, magnæque sedebat
Pallor amicitiaë.*-----Juv. Sat. 4.

SECT. III. It must be confessed, the *love* of God to his creatures, as others describe it, in the manner of an *immediate emanation* from the very *essence* of the Deity, diffusing itself on all sides, is more agreeable to Reason than this, and infinitely more amiable. God absolutely *wills* the greatest happiness of the system he hath made. But though this must be owned to be an *amiable affection*, it hath not all the beauty of a *moral excellence*. A *wise love* is that alone which becomes the Deity. And there are *three periods* in which this *love* may be considered. *First*, as delighting to bestow, in various degrees, the capacities and opportunities of happiness upon a world of intelligent creatures; *then*, as having a peculiar complacency in those of his creatures who improve the capacities and opportunities they have received; and, *finally*, as delighting to crown persevering virtue with the highest actual felicity that his *wisdom*

judges fit and proper. This is such an account of the *love* of God, as gives the greatest encouragement to all sincere and honest souls; and to none but such. To know whether I am beloved of God I have nothing else to do but to inquire, whether I have a prevailing love to that which is good. *The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance beholds the upright.* The love of God terminates first on *things*, and then on *persons*. He loves the *righteous*, because he loveth *righteousness*; so far is that notion from being true which represents God as first absolutely determining to make a certain number of his creatures happy, and, after that, by an irresistible operation of his *Grace*, making them holy, as the indispensable means of their being happy; not to add, that it is pretty hard to conceive, what can be meant by holiness, and by necessity of holiness in the creature, when the holiness of God, as by them delineated, is nothing else but sovereign will and pleasure.—*N. B.* Though *Reason* will discover, that in the same degree as any man loves that which is good, he himself is beloved by the best of all Beings, yet the only certainty of God's so loving creatures whose virtues are so imperfect, as to design them for complete and everlasting felicity, is from *Revelation*.

Seventh COROLLARY.

SECT. I. **T**HE truth of the present scheme being supposed, *the fundamental duties of Religion*, (such as these following, *obedience, resignation, love, gratitude, imitation, prayer, and glorifying God*) appear plain and obvious in the theory, and highly reasonable in the practice. Here is one ground of obedience; I do not say the *only* one, but such a one, that, if there were no other, we should yet be indispensibly obliged to obey God; and now that there are other reasons of obedience, this is a reason of that use and importance, that it ought not to be overlooked. For having the utmost assurance that God can never do nor command what is not fit, we from hence know the fitness of any thing commanded, that God hath commanded it; when, perhaps, it is not knowable in any other way, and being sure that it is *fit*, upon some account or other, to be commanded, we cannot reasonably refuse to do it. If it be said, that, in this case, we only consider the command of God as the *medium* by which we discover the fitness of the action, not as the *formal reason* or *motive* by which we are influenced in performing it; and so, notwithstanding we do what is commanded, yet not doing it because commanded, we do it not in obedi-

ence to God. I answer, that this would be very true, if this were our only inducement to the action; but when there is another reasonable inducement, it is impossible that he, who hath a due regard to the one, should be regardless of the other. The inducement, I mean, is *authority* founded on the several *relations* of Creator, Preserver and Redeemer, which God stands in to us, and the *benefits* communicated in consequence of these *relations*; which *authority* no one can choose but reverence, who does an action, because, from God's commanding it, he believes it to be fit; for as it is fit that he should have an eye to the divine *authority*, so the consideration of this fitness, will have its share of influence, as well as of the fitness of the action to be commanded, which he infers from God's commanding it. Whoever habitually and prevailingly loves what is fit, as fit, for the same reason that he pays a constant regard to one sort of fitness, will do the same to another, and to that most, which is most fit; as nothing can be more fit than that we should do whatever God hath commanded, because he hath commanded it, and not merely because, he having commanded it, we are satisfied of its being fit, that is, conducive to some valuable end: and, much less, merely because of the *promise* or *threatening* annexed to the command. If I have respect merely to these, or so much more to these than to any other motive, that no other motive,

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tive, without these, would be effectual, every body sees that it is not the *authority* of God that sways me, or not principally, but *hope*, or *fear* of being made happier or miserable by his *power*; and so what I do, is not really out of obedience to God, and for conscience sake. So little reason have they to triumph in the piety of their sentiments, who resolve all obligations into the *will* of God, and, when they come to explain themselves, give us to know they mean not the *will* of God, as signifying *what he would have us do*, but *what he intends to do by way of reward and punishment*; to which we may add, that there is no such *immediate* connexion between a respect to *self-interest*, and to the *authority of God*, in the performance of one and the same action, as there is between a respect to the *fitness* of an action to be commanded (however we come to be informed of that *fitness*) and a respect to the *authority* of God commanding that action; the latter of which is as apparently fit as any thing can be, and as likely to influence a person who hath made it a rule to himself always to follow that which is right. One thing that proves this connexion between a regard to *fitness*, and to the *authority* of God, is, that the *chief*, if not *only*, ground of the *fitness* of an action commanded may sometimes be its being a fit, or proper trial of our obedience. After all it deserves to be remarked, that of these

obedience from a persuasion of the *fitness* of whatever God commands to be, for some good reason or other, done) the *latter* seems *directly* and *immediately* to do most honour to God, as it implies an apprehension of his always acting in the most perfect manner, the most honourable apprehension that a creature can have of his Creator; while the former considered as a practical acknowledgment of God's *authority*, or rightful power to command, immediately signifies the regard which the creature in obeying God, because of his right to command, hath to what is *fit*, rather than his belief of God's regard to it in commanding it. And therefore whichsoever of these is supposed to be most *acceptable* to God, (which must depend upon the disposition of the heart from whence they flow) the *former*, as I said, arguing the highest esteem and veneration of God himself, is plainly most honourable to him.

SECT. II. Let a man have this notion of *Divine Providence* as in every part and step of it conducted by the highest Reason, and duely attend to it, and he can have no doubt concerning that resignation which is his duty always to practise towards the great Governor of the world. What more just
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and reasonable than that a *finite* and *fallible* *Understanding* should submit to an *Understanding* that *never errs*; and a *Will* liable to be misled and over-ruled by *irregular inclinations*, to a *Will* that is always *holy*, and *just*, and *good*; and that *Passion* should not be permitted to cavil at that which *Reason* cannot but approve? To sit down easy and contented, because we can get nothing by complaining, is not enough. Did chance and necessity, or humour, govern all, a wise man for the sake of his own quiet, would not struggle with his chain, but endeavour to make the best of a bad matter. This is not our case; the world is the care of an infinitely wise and good Being. Our part, therefore, is to behave as those whose resignation is voluntary and chearful, not forced; or, if forced, is the effect of no other compulsion, but that which proceeds from a full conviction of mind, that every thing is ordered for the best. This resignation, *cæteris paribus*, will be most easy to that man who, as he *believes* so, frequently considers and reflects, that whatever is done was fittest to be done, and that the measure of this fitness is the tendency of God's providential dispensations to promote the final happiness of all the sincere lovers of truth and goodness.

SECT. III. Keeping the same rule in our hand, we shall be led directly into the true notion of the *love* of God; be able to prove the

obligation to it, and furnished with the most certain mark and token of it. Love to God may be considered as a love to the *character*, or to the *person*. The love of God in the former sense, or as *characteristical*, is the delight we take in the thought of an all-perfect Being; in contemplating the idea of such a Being, and believing that this idea is not a creature of the brain, but a copy taken from an original really existing, and possessed of greater perfection than the most exact copy can possibly express. *Moral excellence* is that part of the idea, which is the principal attractive of love, that which is loved for its own sake, and communicates a loveliness to the other perfections, giving them their beauty and lustre. The contemplation of an *eternal, self-existent, all-knowing, all-powerful, and omnipresent* Being, immediately excites admiration, with a sentiment of the profoundest awe and reverence. But that this reverence, this awe, and admiration, may have pleasure mingled with it, such a pleasure in the *theory* of these perfections, as makes us sincerely exult and triumph in the abundant proofs we have of their *real existence*, we must have reasons to believe, that the most *absolute perfection* in every other kind, is conjoined with the most *perfect rectitude of will*; for then our notion of an *eternal almighty, immense and omniscient* Deity, is that of a Being in whom all these perfections have

have the utmost *value* and *excellence* they can derive from the truest and noblest *direction* of them. *Eternity* and *immensity*, without *knowledge* and *power*, affect the mind no otherwise, than an infinite eternal *Chaos* might be supposed to do; together with some *knowledge* and *power* superadded, without *moral perfections*, they cause much the same terror, as clouds big with thunders, and lightnings, and storms, when it is not known where they will fall. But now, only add *moral rectitude*, and the whole scene is changed, and what before was wonderful only, or dreadful, becomes amiable; amiable in the sublimest and most extensive sense, or so as to challenge a love attended with approbation and esteem, and supported by it; which the most *diffusive benevolence*, not founded in *fitness*, would not do. We should approve such a *benevolence*, with almighty power in its retinue, much after the same manner as we should the beneficial operations of *nature*, were *nature* imagined to have had no other parent but *necessity*.

SECT. IV. The *personal* love of the Deity (if I may be allowed the expression) is the pleasure we have in believing, that the best and the most beneficent of all Beings is the happiest; that his *beatitude* as much transcends that of all other Beings, as his *moral perfections* do theirs. There is no room for us

to wish God *happier* than he is, or to wish him the *continuance* of his happiness, for his blessedness is infinite, unchangeable, and everlasting. But the thought of such a happy Being may give us pleasure, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable, in the eternal indissoluble union of *love* and *majesty*, of *infinite holiness* and *unbounded blessedness*. The *obligation* to love God (as the duty hath been now explained) or to rejoice in the fulness and perfection of his nature, and in the unrivalled greatness and permanent duration of his felicity, arises partly from the immediate perception of his loveliness, and partly from our having partook of the effects and emanations of his love. God hath made us capable of judging of *moral excellence*; we cannot exercise those intellectual powers which God hath given us as we ought, but we must perceive that *every degree of moral excellence* is amiable, and consequently the *highest degree* of it most amiable; that the fittest conjunction of happiness is with holiness, and of the most perfect happiness with the most perfect holiness; this we cannot but *immediately* perceive, if we make a right use of our faculties; and our obligation to this seems to me self-evident. The obligation to love God arising from the *divine benefits* I shall consider presently.

SECT. V. The most certain *criterion* or *mark* of our thus loving God, or delighting in the contemplation of a Being, who always does that which is right, and in the thought of his happiness upon that account, is our approving and practising that which is right ourselves, according to the measure of our capacities. This right temper and disposition of mind in ourselves, is the ground of our delight in the perfection and happiness of the divine nature. For being restored to to this excellent temper, we are better able to judge of what is really excellent and good, and cannot but delight in it, and in that most which is most excellent, and therefore most of all in that God, whose excellencies are without comparison superior to all. Our hearts being rightly affected to that which is good, we participate with the supreme Being in his perfections and felicity. We enjoy both at second hand, and, without considering the benefits which we receive from him, or do further hope for, we are wonderfully refreshed with the meditation of a self-sufficient, and all-sufficient Being, who, having the fountain of being and happiness in himself, can never stand in need of any other.—“ *My goodness cannot extend to thee, O Lord! And I rejoice to think thou art so great and happy, that all the services of men and angels*
“ can

“ can add nothing to thy happiness and “ glory.”—Is not this a much better account of love to God? Does it not give more satisfaction to the Reason of our minds, and more plainly shew the necessity of a holy life, if we would deserve the name of *lovers of God*, than theirs who place the love of God in blind passions, and confused emotions and elevations of soul, as often as they *read, or hear, or think, of God, and Christ,* and such like objects; such emotions as the understanding or judgment have little or no part in, and who, as a distinguishing proof of their love, please themselves beyond measure, with the frequency and length of their devotions, without attending to the habitual temper of their minds, or observing what fruits their Religion produces in the course of their lives and actions? This sort of devotion borders so nearly upon the *mystical*, and is so very like the enthusiastical raptures of some famous Saints in the *Romish Church*, that one would almost suspect it to have been originally borrowed from thence.

SECT. VI. The love of God (even that which I have named *personal*) may be distinguished into *three* kinds, *pure, interested,* and *grateful*. *Pure love* is the delight we have in the perfection and happiness of the Deity, from the self-recommending nature of these objects. Happiness so seated gives plea-

pleasure to a mind, rightly disposed, as naturally as light, the first of all created beauties, does to the eye. *Interested love* is the delight we take in the same things, from the expectation of some great advantage that we shall have by them. It is a pleasing thought that the world is the workmanship of an all-perfect Being, and the continual object of his wise and watchful Providence; that this God will be our God, if we make choice of him as such, our guide untill death, and after death, our exceeding great reward. The consideration of this is a very reasonable ground of pleasure and satisfaction. Nor is this pleasure, though it regards our own interest and happiness, at all inconsistent with what merits to be called *love* to God, but is, indeed, necessarily implied in the *love* of indigent creatures; insomuch that if we did not desire the favour of God, and highly value the hopes of obtaining it; if we could be contented to give up all further pretensions to the divine approbation, and to retire out of Being, without knowing and injoying more of God than we have already done, there could not be a surer sign that we did not *love* God; since in the same proportion as we *love* any person, we prize his friendship, and study to recommend ourselves to it. *Grateful love* is the delight we have in the same objects, from the goodness of God already manifested to us, and the obligations he

he hath laid upon us, by his *gifts*, or *promises*.

SECT. VII. *Gratitude* is nothing else but *love* awakened into act by particular favours and benefits. These are proper incentives to *love*; and when they prove so, *love* loses its own name, and assumes that of *gratitude*. Among the many reasons we have to rejoice that God is the happiest of all Beings, and the Head and Lord of the Universe, this is one, that he hath been so kind and gracious to us. And though the infinite disparity of condition between God and the creature, must for ever put it out of our power to return the kindness (which is what *gratitude* never fails of doing where it can) yet nothing shall hinder us from acknowledging it in every proper way, and on every proper occasion, particularly by religious and solemn *thanksgiving*. I am sensible that some allow of no other foundation for *gratitude* to the Deity but *natural benevolence*. “ We
 “ have hardly any notion (saith one *) of
 “ a good and amiable action, but that it
 “ proceeds from this principle, *viz.* a bene-
 “ volence in God, corresponding to kind
 “ instincts in us. If kindness, or a good
 “ disposition be not the spring, no matter
 “ what the nature or consequence of the
 “ action be; however beneficial it may be
 “ to

* Divine Benevolence, p. 27.

“ to us, we like the Being that produced it
 “ never the better, we do not think our-
 “ selves obliged to gratitude, or imagine
 “ him any way the more perfect, as to his
 “ moral character, on the account of it.”
 Most surprizing news! That I should have
 no reason to be grateful to God, because
 he had his reason for being kind to me, tho’
 that reason was not borrowed from any
 merit of mine. This will appear more
 strange, when it is considered that the very
 reason of God’s esteeming what he does for
 his creatures to be *fit*, though not founded
 in their *merit*, is taken from their *happiness*;
 to which for the *creature’s sake*, not *his own*
 (he having no prospect of any accession to
 his own riches by that means) God delights to
 contribute, in every way, and to the greatest
 degree, that infinite wisdom will permit.
 So far is God’s being moved by the *fitness*
 of the thing from diminishing, and much
 more from annihilating, the merit of his
 goodness to us, that in reality we can hardly
 frame an idea of it upon any other foot.
 The Being that acts from pure *benevolence* of
 temper, does so far act like a necessary Be-
 ing; his goodness sheds abroad its influences
 after much the same manner as the sun
 shines, and the water flows. It is true he
knows what he does, and he *wills* the doing
 it, which the others do not. But he *wills* it,
 not as a *moral*, but a *natural*, agent. His
benevolence, in a *physical*, not *moral*, way,
 deter-

determines his *will* to all those actions, which to his *wisdom* appear necessary for the bringing about the greatest good, or happiness of the rational system; not that this greatest happiness is esteemed by him *morally better*, or *fitter* to be chosen than their greatest misery, but only is what his *inclinations* (of which no account is to be given) lead him to promote.

SECT. VIII. The thinking part of mankind have always agreed to place the chief part of Religion in the *imitation* of the Deity. But we must first know what the duty is, denoted by this phrase, *the imitation of God*, before we can judge of the reasonableness of it, or pretend to practise it. The *imitation of God* hath respect to the *general principle of action*, or to *particular attributes*. This *principle*, in all the works of God, hath been shewn to be an inflexible regard to the reason and fitness of things. The universal frame and course of nature speaks to the Reason of every man, that there is a *first cause* of infinite *power* and *wisdom*; and having not the least ground to surmise a *wrong inclination* in the Deity; by which he may be misguided in his judgment or choice, we conclude without hesitation, that he always sees what is best and most becoming him to do, and as he always sees this, so is ever determined to do it. Would we then be *like God* in this respect,

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we have but this one general rule to mind, that as God, without the least variableness or shadow of turning, pursues that which his infinite wisdom dictates to be best, so we, according to the measure of our abilities, diligently enquire after, and constantly prefer, throughout the whole course of our actions, that which appears best to that imperfect understanding, and in that dimmer light, which our Maker hath given us. The more enlarged and accurate our judging faculty, and the more sagacious to discern between good and evil, the greater is the resemblance it bears to the divine understanding. The more careful we are to preserve the subordination of Passion to Reason, the nearer approaches do we make to the Deity, who hath no Passions at all to mislead him. And *finally*, that which completes our *imitation* of the divine Being, as to the *general principle of our conduct*, is when, having fixed our aim right, *i. e.* our general purpose or intention to do nothing unreasonable, nor to leave any thing undone that is reasonable and fit, we keep as close as we can to this our aim and purpose, not knowingly and wilfully declining from it. We follow the Deity in making *fitness* our rule, as he does, and also because he does; without which it would not be *complete imitation*, since that word does not simply denote a resemblance, but a *designed, studied* resemblance: or, at

least, a resemblance occasioned by a familiar converse with the object of it, and so likewise in the common measure of this *fitness*, we conform to the Deity. To him the measure of this *fitness* is his own perfect nature, the several natures of his creatures, and the relations he stands in to them. In like manner, the measure or rule of *fitness* to the creature is the nature he partakes of, and the relations subsisting between him and his Maker, and between him and his fellow-creatures. Is it not undeniable that every one who makes this *fitness* the measure of his actions, *imitates the Deity*, endeavouring *to be holy as he is holy*, and *perfect, as he is perfect*; perfect in his little sphere, as God is in his, which is boundless? I am willing to believe that in all this I talk very intelligibly. But whether they talk thus, or indeed can do it, who are in a quite different way of thinking, deserves to be considered.

SECT. IX. In the *first place*, what can they mean by the *imitation of God* who believe God to have no other reason of his conduct towards his creatures, but *arbitrary Will and Pleasure*? To *absolute Will* in the Creator, there seems to be nothing to answer on the side of the creature, but *absolute submission*. What room can there be for *imitation* unless men of the most obstinate and imperious temper, whose *Will* is their law, are reckoned among the *imitators of God*; which I do

do not find they have yet been even by themselves? They have more reverence for their Maker, than to pretend their having learnt this temper from him ; though this temper, it is to be feared, makes them have the better liking to those high and rigid notions, which represent God much such a one as themselves. Should it be said in favour of this scheme, that in never acting without a reason, we act according to our nature, as created, dependent Beings, and in acting according to our nature, we *imitate* God, who acts according to his, when he substitutes his *Will* in the room of all other reasons ; my answer would be, that I should own this to be very much to the purpose, if our estimate of the nature of God was to be taken from the *absoluteness* of his *Will*, and not from the *perfection* of it. The independence of God upon all other Beings expresses his greatness and perfection. Not so the imaginary independence of his *Will* on the reason and fitness of things : at least, it does not seem so to me.

SECT. X. Let us now try whether those in the *benevolent scheme* can come off any better. After what manner will they explain the *imitation of God*, so as to give a rational and consistent account of it? The supreme Being, they may say, is an example of *benevolence* to all other intelligent Beings. True,

if his *benevolence* be any thing more than a *natural inclination*. But if this is the best can be said of it, then, in giving the *sum total* of the divine actions, we must put it down thus, *the Deity always and only follows inclination*. And may not the *sensual*, the *injurious*, the *revengeful* man plead that he follows his? Notwithstanding which, no one will presume to say that such men are *followers of God*. But their *inclinations* are not like those of the Deity. And can they help that, as far as they are *purely natural*, or even as acquired or strengthened by custom, if in every action of which this custom is made up, they were prompted by some *inclination* or other, which they could not refuse to obey? But they ought to have over-ruled *inclination* by the force and authority of *Reason*. I would gladly know how; supposing *inclination* in every the least movement, be the only *exciting* reason to action. And if *Reason* could have done this, and had done it, *Reason* would then have been the *principle* of their conduct, and not *inclination*; and in following *Reason* they would have departed from the pattern set them by God, of all whose actions, the first and master-spring (if some men say right) is *inclination*. Yes; but his *inclination* is to do good; in doing good, therefore, we *imitate God*, tho' it be only in obedience to *Reason*, not in compliance with *inclination*: in the *effects* we do,

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not in the *original cause* or *principle*; this in us, being of a higher order than in the Deity, if while we are governed by *Reason*, he is wholly led by *inclination*. Which *single reflection* should, methinks, be enough to disgrace this opinion.

SECT. XI. Proceed we next to consider the *imitation of God*, as it respects *particular attributes*. God is *just*, and *true*, and *faithful*, and *good*, and in all these characters we are to set him before us as the great exemplar and original of moral perfection; keeping him continually in our eye, so as not only to be just and good upon other grounds and motives, but to strive to be so with a view of bearing the image of God, and being followers of him as dear children. In this divine image the ruling feature is *universal benevolence*, the lineament that is most obvious and lovely, and in which the likeness chiefly consists. The first view of the Deity is *universal good*, to the production of which, in a way agreeable to the nature of intelligent and free Beings, he imployes his infinite power. Our power is confined within narrow limits; but our *wills* and *affections* are more boundless. We can *wish* happiness to every Being that is capable of it, *rejoice* in every instance of happiness that comes to our knowledge; and, the less we are able to do for the benefit of mankind,

should think ourselves more obliged not to omit doing any part of that little. Here a thought comes in my way—What title the *selfish generation* can have to be called *imitators of God*; they who frankly declare that they have no affection but for themselves, no concern for the interest of other men, further than their own is interwoven with it, so that in their most beneficent actions *self-love* only verifies the old Proverb, that *the farthest way about is the nearest way home*. If *nature* and *practice*, in this sect of Philosophers, be not better than *principle*, they will be hard put to it, to make out their *relation* to God from *likeness*. While God in creating and governing the world, hath no happiness of his own in view, but only that of other Beings, chiefly of those that are intelligent, they for their parts, though capable of proposing, with their own, the happiness of their fellow creatures, and of concurring to it, would never be at the expence of a *wish* for the happiness of others, were it not as a means of their private good. In any other view, the happiness of the *whole world*, of their *country*, of their *best friends* is nothing to them. Say, ye idolizers of *self*, where in the mean while is your *imitation* of the true God?

SECT. XII. It may be of use to observe, that the *infinite distance* between God and
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his creatures is no bar at all to their *imitation* of him. And therefore, when *Puffendorf** says, “ that he does not see how the
 “ sovereign right which God exercises to-
 “ wards his creatures, can be the model of
 “ that right which ought to take place be-
 “ tween Beings naturally equal ; or how a
 “ law that imposes on men mutual obligati-
 “ ons can pass for an image of the divine
 “ authority, essentially independent of all
 “ law and of all obligation.” If hereby he
 would insinuate that there is, and can be, no
 proper similitude between *divine* justice, good-
 ness, truth, and faithfulness, and *human*, I
 think the considerations that have been laid
 before the reader in the progress of this Dis-
 course prove this to be a mistake. Nor
 does the inequality of the *Beings*, or of
 their *stations* in the universe, or the *reflecti-*
on added by *Puffendorf*'s Annotator, at all af-
 fect this question. Are not *superiours*, when
 they behave worthily in their stations, *ex-*
amples to their *inferiours*, teaching them, in
 like manner, to fulfil the duties of their's?
 And whatever difference there may be in
 the *instances* and *occasions* of exercising any
 virtue, where the *general foundation of acti-*
on is the same, the same virtue exemplified
 in any one case, is just ground of imitation
 in every other, how widely distant soever

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* Of the Law of Nature and Nations, B. 2. c.
 3. § 5. *Barbeyrac*'s translation.

it may be, as long as these dissimilar cases are objects of the same virtue. Mr. *Barbeyrac* may therefore, if he pleases, call it an *important* reflection, but to me it appears *trifling*, “ that there are many acts of *human justice* which cannot agree to God, “ because of the excellence of his nature. “ Such are a great number of acts of *universal justice*, and those of *particular justice*, which regulate contracts invented for “ a supply to the wants and necessities of “ life. Who would dare, for example, to “ reason thus, pay your debts because God “ pays his; be grateful, because God is to “ those who have done him good; obey “ your sovereign, because God obeys his superiors; honour your parents, because “ God honours his. Are not these reasonings manifestly absurd?” They are so; and the more manifest the absurdity of such reasonings, the more needless was the remark. But what then, because in the *particular instances* there is no resemblance, does it follow there is none in the *virtue* that governed the action? A steady purpose to make the *reason* of things our rule, agreeably to the example of the Creator of all things, and fountain of all perfection, and on no account whatsoever, to break in upon *right* and *order*, will have that influence upon a man as to engage him to pay his creditors what he owes them, if he is able; to be grateful

to his benefactors, obedient to his parents and civil governors, &c. And, in that virtue which discovers itself in an uninterrupted course of these and all other virtuous actions, he will *truly*, though *imperfectly*, imitate the great author of his existence.

SECT. XIII. As to Bishop *Cumberland's* * observation, “ that we must first know what
 “ justice is, before we can distinctly know
 “ that justice is to be ascribed to God, and
 “ that his justice is to be kept in view by us
 “ as our example ; because, we cannot know
 “ God by an immediate *intuition* of his per-
 “ fections, but by the *effects* first known from
 “ sense and experience ;” I grant the truth of it so far as this, that we must have some knowledge of *effects* before we can have any knowledge of a *first cause* ; but that our whole knowledge of the perfections of the *first cause* is immediately deduced from *effects* I deny, having, I think, proved the contrary in this *Essay* ; viz. that being informed, from a survey of the works of nature, of the *power* and *wisdom* of their author, we are able from his *wisdom*, to demonstrate his *moral perfections*, from which we are supplied with an additional proof of *the law of nature*, and the most perfect pattern for our *imitation*.

SECT.

* Proleg. to his Discourse of the Law of Nature, § 6.

SECT. XIV. A *learned Divine* † is pleas-
 ed to express himself on this subject in the
 following manner. “ There is something
 “ previous to imitating of God, and more
 “ acceptable to him, which is obeying him,
 “ Otherwise, the duties of the first table
 “ would be set behind the second. We
 “ may endeavour faintly to imitate God in
 “ our benevolence towards men; but the
 “ love of God, and all the duties which a
 “ creature owes immediately to his Creator,
 “ are the prior duties, and they are more
 “ strictly and properly the business of every
 “ creature, than imitating God. To imi-
 “ tate his example, is paying him a dutiful
 “ respect; but submitting to his authority in
 “ all things, is most highly honouring him,
 “ and shews the profoundest reverence, re-
 signation and humility.” My general re-
 mark here is, that the *comparison is not just-
 ly stated*; which, when fairly made, is not
 between *benevolence to man* (which is but one
particular instance of imitation, and a duty
 of the *second table*) and *obedience to God in
 general*, but between a proper thorough imi-
 tation of God, and a sincere universal obe-
 dience. When the matter is thus proposed,
 there are two or three things about which,
 I fancy, there will be no controversy, *viz.*
 that *imitation* and *obedience*, are both alike
 necessary,

† Dr. *Waterland's* Obligat. and Efficacy of the
 Christian Sacraments, p. 42.

necessary, being indispensibly required by the law of Reason, and inseperable from the character of a good man; that one of these cannot exist without the other, imitation without obedience, or obedience without imitation, and that, in both these, we honour God and are accepted by him. These things, I imagine, will not be disputed. The question, therefore, that remains must be, which of these is prior to the other, most acceptable to God, and does most highly honour him? I think imitation. Imitation is *prior* to obedience. My reason for asserting this is, that to obey God presupposes our having made a right use of our intellectual powers and faculties, the result of which is a conviction that God hath given us a Law which we are bound to obey, and a resolution to obey it. Now in this right use of our faculties, we evidently imitate the supreme of all Beings, who constantly exerts his most perfect knowledge and power after the most perfect manner.

SECT. XV. I hope too, one may venture to say, that imitation is more *acceptable* than obedience, if all that is acceptable in this *latter* be, when traced to its *original*, borrowed from the *former*; which is really the case. That which gives an act of obedience its whole worth and significancy, is the temper and posture of the mind in performing

forming it, a right affection towards truth and goodness. And what is there so like God, in the imitable part of his nature, as such a temper of soul? And, for what this Author saith, that the love of God is a *prior* duty to imitation, if he means to all imitation of him, it is certainly false. The love of God which is characteristical (*i. e.* a love of goodness, especially as existing after the most transcendent manner in God) being the noblest imitation of him, and that which either includes, or draws after it, every thing that comes under the name of imitation. If he means that it is *prior* to some *particular* and *outward* acts of imitation; though this be true, it makes nothing to his purpose, proving no more than this, that *one* imitation of God is *prior* to *another*; *inward* to *outward*, a similitude of *spirit* to a similitude of *conduct*. Nothing can be plainer than that love, as the principle of obedience, must be *prior* to that obedience which flows from it.

SECT. XVI. That imitation more *highly honours* God than obedience, is, if possible, still more evident. For only consider the direct and immediate language of one and of the other. Obedience directly and properly respects the *authority* and *power* of God; imitation his *wisdom* and *goodness*. And which is most honourable to God, the ac-
know-

knowledgment of his having the *command* of all other Beings, or that he is *infinitely more excellent* than they? Would it not be much more for the honour of a prince to have it said that his subjects, in every part of his dominions, made it their highest ambition to be and do like him, as far as the disparity of circumstances would admit, believing that in the same proportion as they advanced in the imitation of their sovereign, they should advance in perfection and happiness, than that they obeyed him in an implicit resignation, never presuming to controul or dispute any of his commands? The instruction to be drawn from hence is, that though every way of considering the Divine Being yields great advantage, which is a very good reason why we should not forget him under any character and relation, as particularly that of our *rightful* and *almighty Sovereign*, yet our thoughts should be most frequently conversant about the *moral attributes* of God, whether as the *rule* to which every part of his government of the world is conformed, or the *pattern* which we are to follow; and to come as near as we can, that we may have more of the light of it derived into our conversation to make it shine before men. By repeated contemplation we may grow more intimately acquainted with these perfections, be more sensible of their beauty, and feel their attractive influence; the consequence

sequence of which will be, that knowing God better, in those things which are his very nature as a *moral agent*, we shall love and resemble him more; upon the same account as we shall be transformed into his perfect image, when, in the sublime language of *inspiration*, we shall *see him as he is, and face to face*. The more we place our religion in the *love and imitation* of God, the less will the danger be of our omitting *the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and truth*, and shuffling into their room, a feigned sanctity of behaviour, and punctuality in some outward forms of devotion, which will never atone for the want of *a good and honest heart*, and the substantial virtues of a christian life.

SECT. XVII. *Prayer*, by this rule of *fitness*, may seem to be excluded from being a necessary part of Religion. “ For he
 “ that asks is worthy to receive what he
 “ asks, or he is not worthy. If worthy,
 “ he will receive it, though he doth not ask ;
 “ if not worthy, though he ask, he will
 “ not receive *.” The fallacy of which argument lies in *supposing* what ought to have been *proved*, that there is no *antecedent fitness* in Prayer. For if there are several considerations which shew it fit that creatures, circumstanced as we are, should pray
 to

* Maxim. Tyr. Diff. 30.

to God, then it cannot be *fit* that God should make no difference between those who wholly neglect Prayer, and those that are constant and devout in the discharge of their duty; nor can the former be worthy of the favours of heaven in the same sense that the latter are so, not being in a right disposition to receive them. Prayer, regularly performed, and with attention of mind supposes and promotes the true knowledge of ourselves, an habitual regard to the Presence and Providence of God; a sincere endeavour after those things which we make the subject of our Prayer; of those chiefly which in our Prayers we acknowledge to be of the *greatest importance*; and, *finally*, a kind and friendly disposition towards our fellow-creatures. The knowledge of ourselves, among other things, includes the knowledge of our unworthiness, and of our weakness, and indigence; of all which Prayer is a *plain acknowledgment*; the more necessary, because without putting ourselves in mind of these humbling truths, we might be apt in the pride of our hearts to forget them; and, for want of reflecting upon them, to behave unsuitably to our real character of infirm, necessitous, and sinful creatures, who have nothing they can challenge in the way of exchange from the hand of God, and neither enjoy, nor can do, any thing without him.

SECT. XVIII. By the same means the mind is rendered more attentive to the Presence of an invisible God, and to his Providence, both universal and special, directing and ordering all things without us, and operating upon our minds. Who have the most stedfast belief of a super-intending Providence, and reliance upon it, they who live without Prayer, or they who would as soon choose to be without their necessary food? Were the *petitionary* part of divine worship to be laid aside, *thanksgiving* would not continue long after; for what more natural than not to reflect on our having received every thing from the bountiful hand of God when we ask nothing of him; to be unaffected with the effusions of God's paternal goodness on the creation, and look upon all that happens in the common train of events, with the same indifference as if the whole proceeded from an undesigning cause? The unavoidable effect of all which will be, that we shall neither enjoy the satisfaction in what we have that we should otherwise do, nor trouble ourselves about the use we make of it. Prayer is so far from superseding our own care and industry, as to be one of the most powerful arguments and incentives to them. For, I hope, we are none of us so unreasonable, to pray that God would do *all* while we sit still and do *nothing*; that is,
that

that he would do both his own part, and ours too, and put us in possession of all the blessings we need, without our making use of the most likely means to obtain them.

The only construction that a reasonable Prayer will bear, is, *that God would succeed our best endeavours*; which shews that in every Prayer, there is a virtual promise of vigilance and activity on our part, according to the nature and importance of the things desired. A man would be ashamed to pray every day, deliberately and seriously, for his *daily bread*, who by idleness and extravagance took the certain way to make or keep himself poor; to pray that God would give him his *grace* to lead a virtuous and useful life, who would not be at the least pains to practise any one virtue, to deny any one vicious inclination, or to observe any one rule, though never so necessary, for the eradicating of evil habits, or planting of good. And for the tendency which mens praying *with* and *for* one another, hath to beget and cherish *social affections*, they need only consult their own *Reason* and *Experience*. Does not joint and mutual intercession to the *Common Parent* of mankind, and in a peculiar sense the *Father* of just and good men, dispose, as well as teach them, to look upon one another as *brethren*, and at the same time widen both their views and their affections? How could any one, without be-

ing challenged for it by his own mind, recommend others to the favour and compassion of the Deity, and himself refuse to give them any assistance, or perform the least office of humanity for them, how much so ever needed? For should all be thus backward to lend their helping hand (as all may with as much reason as any one person can) how shall they be succoured, in many cases, without a *miracle*? Which, according to the true intent of our Prayers one for another, we do not beg; the meaning of our Prayers for others being no more than this, “ that God, in the ordinary course of
 “ his Providence, would direct things in
 “ their favour, and so influence the minds
 “ of men, that as far as they can be mu-
 “ tually helpful to one another, they may
 “ be excited, each according to his several
 “ ability, to contribute to the publick good.”
 These considerations, with others that might be mentioned, shewing the *fitness* of Prayer (at least in the present state of things) do at the same time prove the *necessity* of it, if we would please that sovereign Being who does what is fit himself, and cannot but require it from his reasonable creatures.

SECT. XIX. To demonstrate the *fitness* of *glorifying* God, and apprehend the *design* of God in exacting this tribute from us, nothing more is necessary than to explain the
 the

the terms. It is the glory of God that he *is*, and *hath*, and *does*, every thing that can enter into the notion of an infinitely *great*, and *perfect*, and *happy Being*, that he *gives all*, and *receives nothing*. His majesty is not like that of earthly princes, which, for the most part, arises from things *without them*, such as *sumptuous palaces*, a crowd of *courtiers*, *attendants*, and *guards*, a great deal of state and ceremony, and other like things, which make a *seeming distinction* between the prince and the subject, where, very often, there is not *the least real one*; and have their chief use from supplying the place of true grandeur and majesty. To *glorify God* is to think of him as he is, and to love him in proportion to our capacities, as he deserves. Of our going beyond the truth there is no danger, but only of our falling vastly short of it. Were there but one reasonable creature, this would be his duty and happiness, to turn his eyes towards this glorious sun, and gaze for ever on his beauty and brightness. This is the first part of the idea of *glorifying God*, or rather the first step to it. The next, and that which most properly and formally constitutes the duty, is when intelligent Beings take the most effectual course, to testify their own just sense of a Deity one to another, and to excite, and cherish, and improve, one in another, the same worthy apprehensions of God, and predominant af-

fections towards him. He *glorifies God* most, whose words and actions are best calculated to propagate right and honourable notions of the Deity, and correspondent dispositions of mind towards him. From whence, by the way, let me observe, that an *active life* appears to be ordinarily preferable to a life of *lazy retirement*, and *barren contemplation*; and to be really *more perfect*. Confession of the truth, and zeal to promote it, solemn and publick acts of worship, a reverent use of the name of God in our common discourse, and (may I not say) above all the rest, a regular, useful, and holy life, are all comprehended under the general expression of *glorifying God*, being apparently necessary to maintain and spread the knowledge and love of God in this part of his reasonable creation. Among these means, it is not without reason, that I have given the pre-eminence to a useful and good life. The greatest person that ever lived upon earth has told us, *herein is God glorified that we bear much fruit*; so (saith he) *shall ye be my disciples*. Glorious character of a disciple of Christ, that he is one that abounds in the fruits of righteousness and goodness! Can any thing be more for the glory of the Master, than to make this a mark of his disciples, leaving them an example that they should follow his steps? Or of the disciple, than to follow, obey, and imitate such a Master?

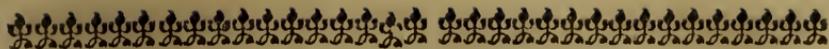
SECT. XX. Whoever attends to what has been now said to explain the duty of *glorifying God*, cannot mistake the *design* of God in requiring it. It is a most certain truth *that God made all things*, even the whole frame of heaven and earth, *for his own glory*; that is, so as that they might be visibly adapted to lead up the *intelligent observer* to the *first Cause*; to excite in the mind, the most elevated thoughts of God, and to impress those sentiments of awe, and reverence, and delight, which are suitable to his infinite perfections. He made intelligent Beings to glorify him in an *active manner*. Not that he *needed* or *proposed* the glory resulting from the works of creation, or from the praises and adorations of the intelligent part of it, *to compleat his own happiness*. He was not moved by the desire of fame as the children of men many times are, in their greatest and most shining actions; who, without considering that in such an action, they shall discharge their own duty, and be useful to mankind, and being urged by this reflection, think of nothing but the renown it will procure them, and how their names will be mentioned with honour, by those that are strangers to their persons, and, as they flatter themselves, by remote posterity. Such a desire of fame, *for its own sake*, may be the *infirmit*y of great minds,

but still it is an *infirmity*, and therefore not consistent with a perfect nature. Alas, what are the applauses of a world, of ten thousand worlds, to him whose greatness and glory is all inherent in himself, and independent of any other Being! What are their united praises to the single approbation of his own eternal mind! He hath a more solid and divine satisfaction in himself than to be capable of delighting in a sound or a shadow.

All that God does, and all that he would have his creatures do, is fit, and he does it, and would have them do it, because it is fit; and forasmuch as this is for the glory of God that he does that, and nothing else but that which is fit for a Being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, to do, and because it is highly fit that reasonable creatures should think, and speak, and act in that manner which is most for the glory of God; in this sense God may be said to design his own glory, *materially considered*, or what declares and shews forth his *essential glory*, but not any glory *without himself* that terminates his view. It is very true, that a great deal of glory will redound from the works of God to their Creator; yea, and further, that he expects such of his creatures, as can do it, should serve and glorify him; but as for the glory that redounds from his works, it is a necessary appendage
of

of their Being, much after the same manner as a noble production in any art is an honour to the artificer. *The work of the Lord is glorious*, and it is glorious because expressive of the idea or platform of it in his own mind; and as thus agreeing with his design, he cannot but approve it, it is really lovely and beautiful. And if God challenges the service and praises of his creatures, it is not that he reaps any advantage from them, or delights in them for their own sake, but because it is fit and reasonable, and for the benefit and happiness of the creature, that he should serve and worship the Creator; and because what is fit, and becoming, and productive of pleasure and happiness, God who is a lover of truth, and order, and of mankind, cannot but approve, and, as the wise Governor of the world, command under pain of his displeasure.

Upon the whole; since we can have no reason to doubt of the truth of that notion which best consults the honour of the divine perfections, best agrees with the universal sense of mankind, and is best adapted to promote the cause of Virtue and Religion, and to answer the most difficult questions on the subject of Creation and Providence, I take leave to conclude, THAT WISDOM (and not *arbitrary Will* or *blind Inclination*) IS THE FIRST SPRING OF ACTION IN THE DEITY.



*A short and easy Rule of Conduct
for Ministers of the Gospel, ex-
plained, applied to some particular
cases, and recommended in*

A

C H A R G E

Delivered at the

ORDINATION

Of the REVEREND

Mr. Farnham Haskoll

A T

T A U N T O N,

Nov. 8. 1733.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT
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CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

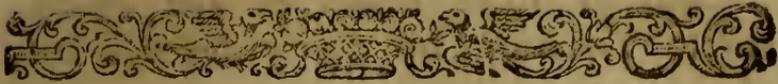
JOHN

ORDINATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

W. D. W. W.

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT



A

*Short and easy Rule of Conduct for
Ministers of the Gospel, &c.*

IT is of very great use, as in the general conduct of life, so likewise, in discharging the duties of any particular function or employment, to have some *first Principle*, some one certain important and comprehensive Rule, by carefully attending to which we may be able to judge more easily of the *course* we have to take, of the very *best manner* of doing things, and the *issue* we may reasonably expect from the whole. I am ready to believe that I have thought of such a Rule as this with regard to the *work of the Ministry*, to which you, *Sir*, have been now solemnly separated; I make no doubt, with an upright and a ready mind on your part, and with the universal approbation of those that know you, and have at heart the true interest of Christianity.

tianity. The Rule I have an eye to is that contained in those words of the Apostle *Paul* to *Timothy*, his dearly beloved Son, 2 *Tim.* ii. 15.

STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD.

The several branches of the *Ministerial Office* have been so often, and so largely treated on, and you, *Sir*, are so well acquainted with them, that I need not say any thing upon this subject. And, indeed, had I a mind to do it, I should find it hard to say any thing but what was common, and had been better said before. But, as I am sensible you are not a little solicitous about the *method* in which you shall pursue the great end of all your labours (*viz.* the promoting of *truth*, and *peace*, and *holiness*) so as most effectually to answer this most desirable end, to have most present satisfaction, and most comfort and pleasure in the review, at the finishing of your course: and as, upon this occasion, you have been pleased to make choice of me to be your *Remembrancer* (for I pretend to no more) you will give me leave to offer to your consideration a few thoughts and reflections (with which I pray God I may always have my own mind deeply impressed) on that excellent advice of the Apostle which hath

hath been now mentioned, STUDY TO SHEW
THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD. “ Be this
“ thy constant aim, thy most ambitious and
“ diligent endeavour, from which thou art
“ not to be diverted by any temptations
“ whatsoever. In every debate that may
“ arise within thyself, which thou shalt
“ chuse among the several and contrary
“ ways that are taken by those who pro-
“ fess to intend the same thing, let both
“ thy first and last inquiry be, which will
“ appear best after I have laid aside, as
“ much as possible, all human views and
“ passions, and have asked counsel, not
“ only of my own calm and retired thoughts,
“ but of the Lord? Which will best stand
“ his awful trial, and may most justly
“ hope to have his final sanction added to
“ it?”

In this *Exhortation*, it is by no means
supposed a thing *unlawful* to desire and en-
deavour our being approved, both of *God*
and man, or a thing *impossible* in any degree
to be attained. The Apostle *Paul* saith of
himself, ^a *that to the Jews* (not yet convert-
ed to Christianity) *he became as a Jew, that*
he might gain the Jews; to them that were
under the Law, (obliged as they thought, by
the Law of *Moses*, though they had im-
braced the Gospel) *as under the Law, that*
he might gain them that were under the Law;
to

^a 1 Cor. ix. 20,—22.

to them that were without Law, (the Gentiles) as without Law, that he might gain them that were without Law; to the weak, as weak, that he might gain the weak; in short, that he was made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some: which however (notwithstanding the indefiniteness of the expression) must be restrained to things *lawful* and *expedient*, such things as did not injure the *truth* of the Gospel, for the sake of which, he says he did all this, *ver.* 23. His design in yielding to *all* being this, that he might *save some*, *i. e.* save them from their errors and vices, which could never have been done, if he had complied with them, in professing the same opinions, and doing the same actions.

The *truth* was what St. Paul would never give up, well knowing that if he so pleased men, he could not be ^b *the servant of Christ*. It is therefore only in *indifferent* matters, that we must imagine the Apostle to have used this complaisance. What *Principles* were in common between him, and others, whom he endeavoured to bring to a more thorough knowledge of the truth, he took the advantage of, and, by approaching as near them as his *peculiar Principles* would permit, shewed it was not out of personal disrespect, or ill-will, that he differed from them. We should willingly

^b Gal. i. 10.

willingly offend *none*, and be glad to please *all*, could it be done by fair and honourable means. If they are to be reasoned into an esteem for Religion, and of us, as no ill advocates for it; if we can overcome them by dint of *good nature*, and by the force of *meekness, gentleness, condescension*, and a *readiness* to do them all kinds of *good offices*, can oblige them to lay aside their prejudices against us; if we can compel *all* to come in, by such methods, we are very happy. But this, I doubt, is a thing rather to be desired than hoped. Yet still, it is encouragement enough, to do our utmost this way, and to persevere in it, that we shall not wholly lose our labour, that we shall at least win those who are more open to conviction, who for number, as well as weight, may be sometimes worth regarding. For we should have too bad an opinion of mankind, and be too much disheartened in our endeavours to serve them, did we believe that truth, and sincerity, and moderation, and benevolence had lost all their influence upon any, or that they did not sway considerably with some.

We read concerning our divine Master in his early years, that *he increased in wisdom, and in favour with God and man*; and the Apostle *Paul* hath told us how we may be acceptable to God, and approved of men,
viz.

viz. by remembering that ^d *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*; that the Gospel had set men free from those restraints in things of their own nature indifferent, which the Law of *Moses* laid them under, and yet that this freedom, as to the use of meats and drinks, was nothing in comparison of the other privileges of the Gospel; that universal righteousness, and mutual peace, and charity, are some of the principal duties enjoined by the Christian Law; and a holy spiritual joy, the present, as well as future reward annexed to it; by calling this to remembrance, and then *in these things serving Christ*, the interest and credit of whose Religion cannot be promoted in any other way, so effectually, as in this.

And if the Apostle *Paul* himself, and the other Apostles of our Lord, and first Preachers of Christianity, were not approved of great numbers of men, what shall we say of the marvellous success of the Gospel, with the dispensation of which they were intrusted? They who embraced a Religion which could propose none of this world's encouragements to its followers, must do it upon the good opinion they had both of the Christian Doctrine itself, and of the Persons who taught it. And, perhaps,

^d Rom. xiv. 17, 18.

haps, sometimes the favourable notion which they had of the *Persons*, from the simplicity and purity of their manners, and their kind, benevolent, patient, and forgiving temper, prepared a way for the easier reception of their *Doctrine*. But then it must be confessed the greatest numbers were still on the other side; and in this sense, the Christians continued for a long time, *a Sect every where spoken against*. And so it will be, in a greater or lesser degree, with the cause and lovers of *truth* at all times, even where Christianity is the established Religion.

Considerate and impartial persons, those who think and judge for themselves, who are above being led away by vulgar prejudices, and have a prevailing love for truth and goodness, to God and man; these will approve a man of upright heart, like themselves, who is concerned for nothing more, than to find the *truth* himself, to assist others in discovering it, and to engage both himself and them, to walk suitably to it. But can it be said, that this is the character of *all mankind*, or of the *greater part* of them? I should be glad to have more reason to believe so.

But though neither the *unlawfulness* of all desire to please men, nor the *impossibility* of succeeding in this aim, in some degree, be

here supposed, yet I much doubt whether it was not designed to be imitated, that all who are approved of men, are not so of God. It is no strange thing, if this happens frequently to be the case, where any *love the praise of men, more than the praise of God*. For, provided they have but cunning enough to know how to manage matters, (and it is not a great deal that is required) they may easily captivate the minds of the simple, and by fair speeches, and other arts, more *obvious* than they are *honourable*, become the idols of all those, whose character it is, that they had rather have their *fancies* pleased, than their *judgments* informed; would rather be confirmed in their mistakes, than convinced of them; and have always the best opinion of such Preachers, as indulge them in the good opinion they have of themselves: such as instead of endeavouring to shew them the unreasonableness of their prejudices, and passions, and personal and party quarrels, fall in with them, or secretly flatter them, as in the right; perhaps connive at their vices, and are more concerned to dazzle weak minds, with an ostentatious and enthusiastical piety, than to edify the world, with the solid, the rational, the useful, and divine virtues of a uniformly holy and good life. By such methods as these, we may conceive the *Pharisees* to have gotten a much greater share of reputation,

tation than they deserved among the common people of the *Jews*, and the *False Apostles* among the more ignorant, injudicious, and wavering part of the first Christians.*

It is enough to cure a man, who hath generous sentiments, of all fondness for such kind of incense, to reflect from whom it comes, and by what low and *dirty ways*, generally speaking, it must be obtained. Not that *persons of integrity*, upon the whole, are out of all danger from the temptation, and are never at all warped, and influenced by it. Indeed, men of this character will not, in order to gain the favour of the multitude, *deliberately* do any thing which they know to be unlawful; but from *vanity*, or *avarice*, or *love of power*, or some other ill quality, which hath not lost all hold in them, they may have their judgments of things, in some measure, insensibly perverted, and, by that means, be drawn to do things not approved of God, while they themselves are so, for the general rectitude of their hearts and lives; or by an excess of good nature, or want of resolution, they may go, or rather be carried, too far.

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* Among the Corinthians, there seems to have been One, who headed a Faction against St. Paul, by whom the Incestuous Person was countenanced, if not openly defended.

A remarkable instance of which we have in no less a person than the Apostle *Peter*, who before that certain came from *James* did eat with the Gentiles, but, when they were come, withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision; the consequence of which was, that the other Jews dissembled with him, (*i. e.* disguised their real sentiments, in respect of the *liberty of the Gospel*) insomuch that *Barnabas* also was carried away with their dissimulation. As what was done by St. *Peter*, and others in this case, proceeded from *weakness*, and was not apprehended to affect the *general cause of Christianity*, it was a very pardonable fault, but still it was a fault, which was the reason that the Apostle *Paul* ^s withstood him to the face, as thinking him worthy of blame. He that is wise, will be made still wiser by such examples, and particularly from this, will learn to take care, that his conversation and management in *religious differences*, as well as his *profession of love*, be *without dissimulation*,

You will not think it improper if I more particularly, but briefly, consider the character of one *that studies to shew himself approved unto God*; then illustrate this character by a few instances; and finally, mention

tion some things which conspire to recommend it.

I. If we consider the character of one *who studies to shew himself approved unto God*; he that would be perfect makes it his first care, *to settle right and worthy notions of that Sovereign Being whose approbation he seeks.* We all think alike method absolutely necessary, when we would cultivate the esteem and friendship of our fellow-creatures; we study their *tempers, their notions, and manner of life*, and suit ourselves to them as far as allowably we can, not giving them any unnecessary disturbance upon these heads, because we know that the art of pleasing is, in general, the same in all cases, and with all persons. This observation may be transferred to the present case, which is of the highest nature that can be supposed. To please God, there is an indispensable necessity of our acquainting ourselves with him, and in all things conforming to his commands, and to the standard of perfection he hath set before us in his nature and works. This conformity is necessary, because he is in one mind, and who can turn him? He is a law to himself, and this law is immutable; there being an essential and everlasting difference in the nature of things, between the *moral Perfections* of the Deity, and their *contraries*. In following God

we follow wisdom and goodness, and are therefore sure never to go wrong, which is a very great satisfaction. Just apprehensions of the divine nature and government are at the foundation of all true Religion; and a man might as well think of hitting a mark he does not see, as of pleasing and imitating a God of whom he is grossly ignorant; for which reason no good man can be supposed to labour under such an ignorance of the Deity.

There are additional considerations which demonstrate the necessity of this knowledge, even of the higher degrees of it, in the *Ministers of the Gospel*, whose business is to guide others into the knowledge of God, and of the several important truths of Religion depending upon this *first Principle*, and derived from it. And, by the way, it is for want of laying this foundation well, that they who should be instructors of the ignorant, instead of being so, are sometimes the unhappy means of leading them into, or confirming them in, the most absurd and dangerous notions of the Deity; notions, which though they may be *fundamental* to some particular *Systems of Divinity*; are, in their *natural consequence*, subversive of the true foundations of the *Christian Faith*; and, while they set Christianity in as bad a light, in some respects, as it could appear in if it was a false Religion,

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undesignedly give the enemies of it a handle to treat it as such. The best that can be said for them is, that *so they have been taught*; and they seem to reason concerning what they have been taught in relation to the *true God*, as the *Heathens* did about some things reported to have been done by their *false God*. * *Sanctius ac reverentius visum de actis Deorum credere quam scire.*

And because it may be thought that there is no need of so much care and pains where persons are, from their very childhood, instructed to say and believe, that *God is a Spirit, Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable in his Being, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness, and Truth*, I shall take the liberty to observe, that though this be a very good definition of the term *God*, yet this definition is no more than *nominal* (a bare account of the *name*) with regard to all those who are not instructed in the meaning of it. For what signifies our ascribing all possible perfection to God, if we have no idea at all of the perfections we ascribe to him, or a confused, or mistaken one, which, upon some accounts, is worse than none? While we honour God by giving him the titles of *wise, holy, just, good and true*, we may dishonour him by believing such things of him as are utterly

* Tacit. de Mor. Germ.

inconsistent with these perfections, and would forfeit all pretence to them in a man like ourselves. Now an indistinct and inconsistent belief, though it may not do all the hurt of one *totally erroneous*, where there is a good and honest heart, yet, to say the least, is not likely to prove such a source of sincere and rational *pleasure* to the mind, nor such a steady inflexible *rule* of conduct, as one that, being cleared of all disagreeing mixtures, is throughout just and true.

Having settled such notions of God as he can securely build on, the next thing which the man who *studies to shew himself approved unto God* is concerned for is, *to know the mind and will of God*; what God expects from him in his *personal* or *relative*, his *private* or *publick* capacity, as a *Christian*, or a *Christian Minister*. Without despising the light of Reason, he blesses God, from his heart, for a supernatural Revelation, and is of opinion that as Revelation is a vast improvement upon Reason, so Reason is of great use in proving, and estimating the value of Revelation, towards the right understanding of it, in pointing out and clearing the connexion of revealed Religion with natural, and the true grounds of both in the eternal and unchangeable difference of things. From the *Scripture* he draws the scheme of *Christian Doctrine*, and the model of a *Christian Life*, with all the

the exactness and fidelity he is capable of, and from thence traces out his duty as a Minister of the Gospel.

But forasmuch as the general duties of a *Christian* and a *Minister* are as plain as they are important, and agreed on all hands, I content myself with just putting you in mind of them, because you know them, and are established in the things which become *sound Doctrine*. What I have more particularly in my view here, is the care taken by the person I am speaking of to know the will of God in *points of conduct*, about which the world is divided; and in *cases* which, though they may be plain enough of themselves, are yet rendered doubtful and perplexed by notions and customs that have gained authority by establishment and length of time. And here he continually finds the advantage of those clear and rational conceptions which he hath entertained, and well digested, concerning the nature of the works of God; which open and enlarge his mind, render it more quick and sagacious in other questions that have any connexion with these, rectify and conduct the judging faculty, put the right clue into his hand, and set him above those servile superstitious fears, those weak and groundless jealousies and scruples, and those vulgar prejudices to which persons who are afraid

afraid *to think freely* (in the best sense of that word) are perpetually liable.

To these just *notions* of the Divine Being he forgets not to add humble and frequent *addresses* to him for direction, illumination and assistance, not at all doubting of the truth of that promise, that *the meek he will guide in judgment, the meek he will teach his way*; that God hath an immediate access to the mind; and, where his influences are piously acknowledged and earnestly besought, does frequently give that light, and throw in those hints, which free a man from the perplexity of thought he was before under, and make his way plain and easy before him.—Nor does he foolishly make his trust in the *divine guidance* a pretence for neglecting the rules of common *Prudence*; but considers *Times* and *Seasons*, *Persons* and *Things*, and makes proper allowances for every circumstance; in which he hath the authority of *St. Paul's* example, who at one time circumcised *Timothy* ^g *because of the* (unconverted) *Jews that were in those quarters, who all knew that his Father was a Greek*: at another time, would not suffer that ^h *Titus* who was a *Greek* should be compelled to be circumcised, and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out the liberty which the professors of the Gospel

^g Acts xvi. 3.

^h Gal. ii. 3—5.

pel had in Christ Jesus, that they might bring them into bondage; for which reason the Apostle gave place to them by subjection, not so much as for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with the Churches.

There was, indeed, this material difference in the two cases, that *Timothy* was a *Jew* by the *Mother's* side, *Titus* entirely a *Greek*, or *Gentile*. Yet still, in representing the Apostle's conduct on these two occasions, the design seems to have been to intimate his being more yielding in one case than in the other, together with the reason of it. It is probable that, barely to gratify these *false brethren*, he would not have circumcised *Timothy* any more than *Titus*, since he would not give place to them (or submit to any of their demands) so much as for an hour: and, on the other hand, that, to avoid offending the *unbelieving Jews*, he would not have taken *Titus* with him as he did *Timothy*; the circumcision of *Titus* being what he would not have consented to upon any terms; without which, the *Jews* would have had an insuperable prejudice against him, if he had chosen *Titus* for his Assistant, he would therefore have followed the middle way, and left him behind.

At first *St. Paul* did not communicate with any concerning the Gospel which he preached

preached to the Gentiles; afterwards he did, as we learn from the beginning of the Chapter just quoted, where it is said, that *fourteen years after* he went up again to *Jerusalem*—by revelation, and communicated to them the Gospel which he preached to the Gentiles, but privately to them that were of reputation, (that is, to the *Apostles*, to whom he first and more particularly imparted the affair) lest by any means (saith he) *I should run, or had run in vain; i. e.* lest he should be less successful in his future labours, or give his enemies an opportunity to destroy what he had already built, if it should be believed that he taught the circumcision of the *converted Gentiles*, or that he and his Gospel were not owned and approved by the other *Apostles*, both which suggestions were at once confuted by the friendly reception he had from the *Apostles*, and their not compelling *Titus* to be circumcised. The instruction from whence is, that *circumstances* being different, a prudent man will not think that his *conduct* ought always to be exactly the same.

Finally; being satisfied, after mature examination, what is the will of God, in relation to any debated point, he is so intent upon approving himself to his great Lord and Master, that *he will follow that which appears to be his duty, whatever contradiction, reproach, or inconvenience, he may happen to*
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suffer by it. He is thus resolved not only in the essential and uncontroverted duties of his Christian and Ministerial Profession, giving all diligence to be regular and holy in his conversation, and faithful in the trust committed to him, but further, in things too often overlooked by persons, in the main, sincere, through haste, or prepossession, or a secret bias to something or other, that lies out of the strait and narrow way: the question with him who strives to be *perfect* in all incidental matters, as well as others, not being—Will this suit with my worldly interest? Is it agreeable to my inclinations? Or can I hope by doing this to please men? No; but shall I be approved of God? In this also like St. *Paul*, who, when it pleased God to reveal his Son to him, that he should preach him among the heathen, immediately set about the work he was called to, ⁱ *not conferring with flesh and blood, i. e.* with any man whatsoever to know his opinion upon it: and who, by being less forward in asserting the liberty and privileges of the *Gentile Converts*, might have easily avoided a good part of the storm that fell upon him, for so he asks (in answer to some who suggested that he was guilty of *temporizing*, by seeming to allow the necessity of circumcision, which was a favourite notion of the Jews) ^k *if I yet preach*

ⁱ Gal. i. 15, 16.

^k Gal. v. 11.

preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offence of the cross ceased. As much as if he had said, the persecutions which I undergo from the Jews, are a clear proof of the falsity of this charge of my preaching circumcision, since the great offence which they have taken up against the doctrine of a crucified Jesus, is the apprehension of its being intended to set aside the rites and customs of the Mosaic Law. Would I spare them in this one point, for all the rest, they would more easily forgive me.—Let this suffice for the character.

II. I shall now produce a few instances which serve to illustrate this character, and in which the man, who *studies to shew himself approved unto God*, in the manner before explained, makes it visible that he does so.

I. Is he persuaded of its being not only his undoubted right, but his plain duty, to search and judge for himself? In this case, that he may be approved of God, he lays aside all undue regard to human authority, to great names, and great bodies of men; and leaving the streams which, for ought he knows, may have been poisoned, or at best defiled and muddied, he goes immediately to the *fountain-head* of truth. And it would
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be exceeding strange, if, being so impartial, and having such just notions of God as I have supposed, he should not discern this to be his duty; as it is to me amazing how any of tolerable sense and honesty can make it a *serious dispute*, whether it be his right. It is, indeed, the right of every man to use the faculties which God hath given him, and, as far as he is capable, and has opportunity for it, to see with his own eyes, to search the Scriptures, to try notions and spirits, and having proved all things, then to hold fast that which is good, which sometimes cannot be known to be good before trial. This is every man's birthright, as a man, and much more every Christian's; and being their right, must in a greater or lesser degree, according to the diversity of their capacities and circumstances, be their duty too.

But was the matter doubtful in respect of *Private Christians* (which it is not) yet, as to *Ministers*, the most palpable absurdities, and some of the worst of consequences, must attend the denial of this liberty. Are they not the Ministers of Christ? And is it not the Gospel of Christ that they are to preach? Granted; may it be replied by some; but then they must not look into the bundle that is delivered them, but let things pass just as they have received them, either from *the Church of Rome* (as they of
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that Church say) or from *Sets of Articles, Catechisms, and Confessions*, as too many Protestants would say, did not their principles, as Protestants, make them ashamed to speak out. But I would be glad to know why we must not receive *the Doctrine of Christ* from *Christ himself*, since we may have it *immediately* from him? Or why it is thought a necessary qualification in a Minister of the Gospel to understand (at least) the *Original Language*, in which the writings of the *New Testament* were penned, if, in studying these writings, he is tied up to one particular System of Notions, which he must make his rule of interpretation, under the specious title of the *Analogy of Faith*, without regarding the design of the author, the coherence of the discourse, or the force and propriety of words? *Study to shew thyself approved unto God*, (saith the Apostle) *a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth: i. e.* (as the *Context* makes probable) separating among the things that are taught by men, things *important* from things *trivial*, *truth* from *error* and *fable*, that nothing but the pure uncorrupted word of God may remain.

One inference from hence (which lies too plain to be overlooked) is, that a man who sets up for a teacher of others, and yet takes indifferently all doctrines that he hath been taught,

taught by the *Masters of his Faith* (notto say of his *Conscience*) without knowing how to part the good from the bad, or being any way concerned to do it, is a workman that hath too much cause to be ashamed. A like direction is given by the same Apostle in his Epistle to *Titus*, where speaking of a *Gospel Bishop*, he says, ¹ *He must be one who holds fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, πισυ λογυ, the word worthy of credit, which may be known by this mark, that it is κατα την διδαχην, according to the doctrine of Christ, and his Apostles, not of designing, or of weak and fallible men.*

But may we venture to go off from the principles of such and such, whose praise is in the Churches for their exemplary piety, and strictness of conversation? The answer is easy. If the *piety* was all, or almost all, on one side, there might be some temptation to suspect the *truth* was so too, but, when in order to follow one set of good men in their opinions, we must abandon others of equal piety, and, as it may happen, superior learning; or, if we will hold with all sides, must believe contradictions, we must leave this rule to those who have vanity enough to think that the power of Religion is confined to their own party.

But shall private Ministers presume to remove those boundaries and landmarks, which have been settled in Synods, and other venerable Assemblies? This question may be answered by another. Did these Assemblies pretend *Authority to decree Articles of Faith*, or did they not? If they did, it will be time enough to submit to their decrees, when they have satisfied the world, who gave them this authority. If they did not assume any such authority, as they could not do it consistently, without challenging infallibility too, why should we be so forward to compliment them with that authority and infallibility, which they themselves professedly disclaim? Or why appeal to their Decrees as the last resort, when they themselves send us for the proof of all they have decreed and taught to the *Holy Scriptures*? In vain are we referred to the *Scriptures*, if after all we must not *search the Scriptures, to see whether these things are so*, but be obliged to receive the *Scripture* with their interpretation of it. A power in any men to *interpret Scripture*, without being liable to have their interpretations called in question, is, in effect, the same as a power to add to it; for how shall it be known whether any thing be added or no, when barely their saying that this, or that, is only the true sense of Scripture, (though to us it hath all the appearance of an addition) is

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a sufficient reason to believe, that it is no more?

It further deserves to be considered, that it doth not follow a man is singular in his opinions, because they are not to be found in a *harmony of Confessions*. On the contrary, of those that have taken up their opinions, and continue in them, because, after fair trial, they judge them to be right, not going just as they were led, the greatest number may be on his side of the question. Or taking an equal number of men, of equal probity, learning, and abilities, will we say they are more likely to find the *truth* in a Synod, than out of it? One would think the contrary; because when alone by themselves, they have their thoughts more about them, are capable of canvassing things with greater care and dispassionateness, and (which is no small matter) are not so much under the management of a few *leading men*, who govern things more by art, or authority, than by *Reason*. And as for the want of *humility*, which is so often charged on a Minister's exercising a right of private judgment, one would rather imagine the suspicion of pride would lie on their side who take upon them to judge, not only for themselves, or for all others of the same age, but for the Church of God, in all following ages. If this be not inconsistent with humility, I do not see how every man's judging

for himself, leaving to every other man the same liberty, can be so, especially when every man must give an account of himself to God. Why should they judge for me, who are not to answer for me?

But is this all the respect we have for the memory of our first *Reformers* and *Martyrs*, to depart so lightly from the faith, in which they died? My reply is, if by *their Faith* be meant the *Protestant Faith*, or the pure undefiled Religion of Christ, as opposed to the corruptions of *Popery*, the more diligently we study the *Scriptures*, and the more we use our understandings in Religion, the less danger there is of our forsaking this *Faith*. But if by *their Faith* be understood certain *Tenets*, which, as they do not enter into the character of a *Protestant*, so were never yet proved to belong to Primitive Christianity, there is no great harm done, if in these things we do not think as our *Fathers of the Reformation* did; nor is it any *reflection* at all upon them who, having their thoughts and time so much employed in detecting and reforming the abuses of *Popery*, had not that *leisure* (I might have added, nor those *advantages*) for revising and clearing all the parts of the Christian scheme, by a more thorough knowledge of the scriptures, that their successors have had; and, besides that, were naturally prejudiced in favour of some notions, for their ap-
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prehended opposition to certain errors of the Romish Church, not duly considering, that this opposition might be of the same nature with that, which two extremes have one to the other.

And whereas it is esteemed such an honour to some opinions, that they were the opinions of our *English*, and other *Protestant Martyrs*, (not to observe that they were not so properly the opinions of the men, as of the times) what if it shall be found that the Christian Fathers and Martyrs (indeed, the Christian Church in general) of the three first ages, held different notions? I hope this prejudice in favour of one side, may at least be sufficient to balance that now mentioned on the other; and that this is actually the case, in respect of some notions which have borrowed their name from an eminent *Reformer* (such as that of mens being good or bad in consequence of an *absolute decree*, which is the same as by *necessity*, not by the use or abuse of their freedom of choice, &c.) will hardly be disputed.

After all, the person I am speaking of is far from setting up his private sense as superior to that of the rest of mankind, is ready to mistrust his judgment when he hath the concurrence of few or no thinking and serious persons in it; is not fond of differing from others for differing's sake; on

the contrary, he would be much better pleased to have no occasion to leave the beaten track; he is thankful for all the assistances he receives from others, be they who they will, in finding out the true sense of Scripture, neither vainly conceiting himself about these helps, nor ashamed to confess his obligation for them; and many times where he sees reason (or thinks he sees it) to depart from the judgment of worthy men, as he does it with all *modesty*, so, perhaps, something or other dropped in their Writings hath struck the light which leads him to discern their mistakes, or by some *common principles* upon which they very much insist as well as others (*e. g.* the infinite goodness of God, the sincerity of his promises and declarations, the preheminance of the love of God beyond all the positive parts of Religion, and the necessity of practical holiness) he is able to prove the erroneoufness of some notions which they graff upon these noble principles, by shewing that they cannot possibly grow upon such a stock, to which they are likely to do more hurt than they can receive advantage from it.

Yet notwithstanding this liberty of judging is so very evident from Reason and Scripture, and it be managed with all the Inbmission consistent with a due regard to truth, and the authority of the only Head and Lawgiyer of the Church, whoever does
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not express a like reverence for *human Creeds* as for the Word of God, is sure to be censured by almost every party, though there is no party but would give him leave to have as little respect as he pleased for every other *Creed* and *Catechism*, as far as it differed from their own. Be it so, (since such is the prevailing humour of mankind) he that studies in all things to shew himself approved unto God, will not be much moved by this. He is sure that it is not for the sake of his ease, or worldly interest, that he challenges a right to think and examine; since he should consult these much better by *believing every thing, and disputing nothing*; and he is conscious to himself that he does not act out of pride, and a spirit of contradiction; and therefore whatever be the present temporal disadvantage to himself, he is determined to persevere, contented to go through good report, and through evil report, and to receive bad usage together with good.

II. Is the same person satisfied in his own mind, that having found the truth by diligent and impartial enquiry, and duly weighed all the circumstances of the case, he is obliged to speak his thoughts with an honest freedom, and to set himself to detect and confute received errors, as he hopes to have this part of his conduct approved by him who hath put him into the Mi-

nistry? Being thus persuaded, he does not hesitate what he shall do, but is ready to hazard every thing of his own rather than napkin up the truth when it ought to be brought into light. It is here supposed, that he hath calmly considered both the *truth* and *importance* of his opinions before he troubles others with them, not chusing to risque his own reputation, or the peace of any part of the Christian Church, upon points more doubtful and difficult, than necessary to be known; and, in stating the reasons *for* and *against* speaking out *the whole truth*, hath been very careful to cast up the account right. He will not indifferently, in all places and companies, and upon all occasions, in season, or out of season, utter all his mind; which would be acting too much like *Solomon's fool*, whose ^m *wisdom faileth him*, when he *walketh by the way side*, insomuch that he *saieth to every one* he meets, *that he is a fool*.

He hath also that regard to the weak side of human nature, always tenacious of old opinions, as to make trial first of what can be done in a less open manner, and being crafty he endeavours to catch his hearers with an innocent guile; stealing away their notions from them while he leaves them their phrases, and then afterwards, when he hath prepossessed them with other notions,

^m Eccles. x. 3.

tions, prevailing with them to resign their phrases too, as no way proper to express the notions they have now entertained. Or he sees ground to think that an unreserved declaration of his sentiments, either because of his age which would not add any authority to what he saith, or for some other reason, would do more hurt than good, and therefore he hath his saith to himself till a more favourable opportunity offers for making it publick.

But if, after long waiting, such an opportunity as he wishes is never likely to happen, but false opinions are industriously propagated, and with more zeal and bitterness than usual, and handed down from fathers to children as *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, from which they must not deviate an hair's-breath; if he hath instances before him of the ill effects of certain religious principles upon the *lives* of any, whom he is not able to recover out of the snare of the Devil any other way than by shewing them that though they *reason right*, yet it is from *wrong principles*; and upon the *tempers* of a great many more, rendering them either morose, conceited, censorious, or melancholy and dispirited in Religion: and if, moreover, his not saying any thing against such principles, is deemed an argument of his being a friend to them, or the effect of a mean and cowardly

ly spirit; when the honour of Religion, the safety of souls, and his own usefulness are thus at stake, he dares be valiant for the truth, and can, with pleasure, sacrifice every thing for the sake of it, when he knows it will not be *the sacrifice of fools*. Not that he will render railing for railing; but contrariwise, *Reason for Inveective*, and *Blessing for Cursing*. He will, for *prudence-sake*, speak his mind in a manner the *least offensive* that is possible, and forbear giving some things as bad names as they deserve; chusing rather to expose the *deformity of error*, by setting the *truth* in all its *amiableness* and *evidence* over against it, than in strong and direct terms.

It is not improbable that he will be thought an *enemy* by many (especially when some who have their private ends to serve by it, suggest that he is so) *because he tells them the truth*; even though he tells it them with the most insinuating softness and gentleness, and cannot keep silence with a good conscience. When this happens out, he is sorry for it, more for *their sakes* than his *own*; but still holds to his resolution, not to be kept by the *fear of man* from *openly asserting* the truth when it is necessary, any more than to be awed and checked by the *authority of man* in settling the important question, *What is truth?*

III. After revolving the matter in his most unprejudiced and deliberate thoughts, is it his judgment that by such a particular way of preaching he shall do most good, promote the knowledge and practice of true Christianity more than by another, which, it may be, is more agreeable to his own inclination, or will better strike the taste of his hearers? If these are his thoughts, he is not for pleasing himself and others at the expence of what is of much greater importance than any thing *merely entertaining* can be. Was a Minister to consult nothing else but the exercise and improvement of his own genius, and to use the method and style which pleased him most in the writings or preaching of other men, and which would give most scope to his imagination (it may be naturally lively and fruitful) possibly his Subjects would be too often of a speculative nature, and more curious than profitable; his way of thinking would be too far removed from that which is common; his reasoning be too close and abstract, and his language too laboured, or abound too much with ornaments for the meaning to be easily come at by ordinary people. Which now shall he do, *please himself*, or *profit his hearers*? The question does not require much time to be answered by one who constantly studies to shew himself approved unto God. He will not, in compliment to a few, overlook the
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rest of his audience who are the greater number; nor, barely to make his court to the greater number, go into a manner of preaching which he himself is convinced to be wrong, and will be disliked by the more judicious few. He knows a way in which he could, with very little pains, procure to himself the applause of some sort of people, and at the same time make them believe they were greatly edified too. When he was to prove a thing he could make use of arguments, which, though really inconclusive, should do more to persuade a great many of the truth of what he aimed to establish than the most solid proofs could do. And without enquiring after the true sense of Scripture, which is not found without some trouble and pains, he could by only following the sound of words, and idly playing with metaphors, get himself the reputation of a *profound Divine*.

What more easy than for a man (if his conscience will permit him) to appropriate to himself and his Brethren the name of *Experimental Preachers*, and to the people of the same way that of *Experienced Christians*? To have the *Name of Christ* often in his mouth, taking no care to represent the Christian Religion so as that it may be an honour to that name; a name dear to all true Christians, because they love their Saviour in sincerity; and pleasing to a great
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many others, because they strongly conceit themselves to be *loved* by him? What more easy than to talk much of *Faith, Justification, the Righteousness of Christ, free Grace,* and the like, not from the *Scriptures* (diligently studied and compared one part with another, so as to make the whole a consistent scheme of doctrine) but from certain Writers; whose works are of such authority with some, that they may be called *Deutero-canonical*? To say the very same things that have been said a thousand times over, and in the same set of phrases and expressions, without giving the least new light to any subject, or making people a jot wiser than they were before?

In fine, what more easy than to say *little* of the *precepts* of the Gospel, and *nothing* in proof of the *reasonableness* of them? To infuse suspicions and jealousies of *Reason* as no friend to *Religion*? And to make general declamations about the weakness and corruption of *human nature*, and the insufficiency of natural light, which *comparatively understood*, and with proper *limitations* added, would be true enough, but are far from being so when *spoken absolutely*, and tend to give the hearers very wrong notions in Religion? What more easy than all these things? And yet what more certain way among some persons to secure the name of a *Gospel Preacher*? Explaining in a rational

tional intelligible manner the *grounds* of our obligations to the Redeemer of the world, together with the *nature*, the *design*, and the *intrinsic excellence* of the Gospel Dispensation; setting before men the terms of acceptance; telling them their duty plainly and fully, the *encouragements* they have to perform it, (from the promise of *Divine Assistance*, the tranquility and happiness of a religious life *at present*, and the hope of *eternal glory*) and the extreme *perril* of neglecting it; without adding such exceptions and limitations (as to *the persons intended*) as tend to enervate the force of the most powerful motives and earnest exhortations; this way of preaching is cold, and legal, and unedifying, and not to be compared with the former. But though the former way would be easier to himself as well as more agreeable to the major part of his audience, till their judgments were more improved, yet he cannot allow himself thus to play the cheat with his hearers, amusing their fancies, and working up their affections, without any thing to support them, instead of enlightening their understandings, inspiring them with the love of a holy as well as a crucified Jesus, and bringing them to esteem and practise the substantial virtues of the christian life.

IV. Is he persuaded that *zeal* for the *truth* is no way inconsistent with *charity* for

for those that are apprehended to be in *error*? He does not think his *charity* (proceeding from that very temper of mind on which the Gospel lays so much stress) a thing to be ashamed of. What though by this means he himself forfeits the *charity* of persons of more *zeal* than *knowledge*, and more *conceit* than either, and they have a worse opinion of him only for having a favourable opinion of some that think not as they do, or as he himself does; scarce allowing that he can be a *good Christian*, who is not a *good party-man*? He pities those that are of such a narrow spirit, but is too honest, with his present view of things, to do as they do; joining to hunt down a man as soon as the common cry is against him, when he professes the greatest regard to the honour and authority of Christ, and hath nothing but what is christian in his behaviour. He is not hasty to believe another man is in opinions which seem to him evidently to contradict the Christian Revelation; does not make the difference wider than it really is, nor lay more stress upon it than it will bear; takes not up every flying report of a person's having *said this* and *done that*; does not love to fix names which he knows will hurt the reputation and lessen the usefulness of another Minister, nor esteem it good evidence of the truth of any story told to his disadvantage, that he is one who
does

does not vote and subscribe as he could wish him to do. Can I, in my heart, believe, O most righteous and merciful God, that this is such dealing as thou wilt approve? Or is this doing to others as I think it equitable they should do to me? Or as I actually do to those for whom I have a tender affection, or on whom I have a dependance, when they go astray?

He studiously avoids entering into party-quarrels, is very sensible of his being himself frail and fallible, takes not upon him to judge the *hearts* of men, and considers that it is not so much the *knowledge* as the *love* of the truth; not so much *faith* as the *good disposition* of mind from whence it flows, that renders a man *acceptable to God*; that one man may *believe* the truth he *bates* (as *the Devil* we are told, *believes and trembles*) another in things not essential to Religion miss the truth he loves, and is continually *enquiring after*. He never yet heard it suggested that *that* passage of St. Paul is corrupted in our present Bibles, *and now abide faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity*; nor did he ever know any one pretend to assert in words of that noble description of charity, by the same inspired Writer, that, when filled up as it ought to be, it would run thus; *charity suffereth long* (the faults of those that are of the right party) *and is kind* (to them.)

cha-

Charity envieth not (those who humbly take their lessons from us, and never presume to rival, much less, out shine us.) *Charity vaunteth not itself* (where there is no temptation to do it.) *Is not puffed up* (unless it be, when we have got an enemy at an advantage, and can trample him under our feet.) *Does not behave itself unseemly* (except when a good cause requires it.) *Seeketh not her own* (when she hath nothing of her own to seek.) *Is not easily provoked* (where nothing is done to provoke it.) *Thinketh no evil* (of a few chosen favourites.) *Rejoiceth not in iniquity* (received, but, done.) *But rejoiceth in the truth* (when it is apprehended not to favour the opposite-side.) *Bear-eth all things* (that need little or no patience to bear them.) *Believeth all things* (to the advantage of its own, and disadvantage of the adverse party.) *Hopeth all things* (good to the one, and evil to the other.) *And endureth all things* (all things, where only the precepts of the Gospel are broken, but nothing where the truth of certain opinions, or expediency of certain injunctions purely human, is called in question.) What a deformed picture would these inconsistent additions make of one of the most beautiful in the world, as it is drawn by the pen of an inspired Apostle!

I shall shut up this head with a remarkable Story, which I have read—“ That when

“ *Gomarus*, accusing *Arminius* before the
 “ *States*, said, that the opinions of his Col-
 “ legue were such in the articles controvert-
 “ ed between them, that he, for his part,
 “ would not appear with them before God ;
 “ some persons, a little moved with such
 “ an instance of censorious zeal, could not
 “ forbear declaring that they had rather ap-
 “ pear before the divine tribunal with the
 “ *Faith of Arminius* than with the *Chari-*
 “ *ty of Gomarus.*”

I must entreat your patience, while I
 little more than mention a few Considerati-
 ons, among many, that recommend this ex-
 cellent and amiable character. You will
 agree with me, Sir, that,

It is a consideration which must afford
 great peace and support to an honest mind,
 that whoever studies to shew himself ap-
 proved unto God, is sure to be approved
 of him ; for he is not a hard master, who
 reaps where he hath not sown, or a respec-
 tor of persons in judgment. It is true, he
 requires sincerity of all, but since that does
 not signify any particular *degrees* of strength
 and capacity of service, given to some, and
 not to others, or particular heights of per-
 fection, not attainable by all, but only a
 faithful improvement of the abilities and
 opportunities we have, it must be every
 one's inexcusable fault, if he be not sincere.
 Besides, that this want of sincerity can ne-
 ver-

ver be charged upon the person I have been describing, who is able to say (proper allowances being made for the imperfections of human nature, and for the great distance between the two characters) as his blessed Master did, that he seeketh not his own will, or his own glory, but the will, and the glory of his Father in heaven.

Consider further, that having approved yourself unto God, you will not fail of being *self approved*. And this is no small matter, for a man to stand well with himself. As far as you are assured of the approbation of the great Judge of heaven and earth (and you are assured of this in the same degree, as you are conscious of an unfeigned active desire to please him) you cannot but have rejoicing in yourself, and your joy no man taketh from you. It is a reasonable joy, because founded in *truth*; and it is a joy in some sort divine, because arising from those things which render a man like God, since God approves none but those in whom he sees some traces of this likeness. A diligent endeavour to shew ourselves approved unto God bespeaks the participation of a divine nature, that is, a right temper of mind, and a holy and heavenly life, with a care to perform the duties of our particular profession as becometh the servants of the all-knowing, and all-perfect God; a character as honourable in itself as any can be.

You may add, that the man whose character this is, will, *ordinarily*, secure the approbation of those whose good opinion and good word is most valuable. And, as to others, he may hope to gain upon them by little and little; provided, he pursues a steady inflexible course of piety, charity, and moderation. Nay his very enemies (if after all he hath any) will not be so forward to open their mouths against him, unless their prejudices are great indeed, and their tempers more than ordinarily bad, or there be somewhat else very singular in the case.

ⁿ *In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech which cannot be condemned; that he who is of the contrary part may be more ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. But supposing the worst, yet,*

Consider the service that is done to Religion by examples of a tried integrity, and universal goodness. Religion does, upon the whole, gain by such characters as to the reputation it bears in the world. And, in truth, were not its credit a little kept up by such, they who were strangers to it, or bore it no good will, would be ready to say that Christianity was not a Religion calculated to promote the freedom of the mind,

^p Tit. ii. 7, 8.

mind, to enlarge the heart, to sweeten the passions, and to unite mankind in the bonds of love; but, on the contrary, to split them into parties and factions, and both to heighten and justify their rage one against another; to make a narrow, angry, unconvertible temper, still more so, and to establish every where a spirit of superstition. Thus would some be apt to speak evil of things which they did not know, judging of them from the general behaviour of those who talked most about them. Thanks be to God, that, as our holy Religion itself, viewed in the writings of the Apostles, does not give the least countenance to such a charge, so there are examples, (to be found I trust, in all parties,) which prove it to be unjust. Would to God they were more! It is worth any one's while, that wishes well to Religion, to be among them, whatever it costs him. Once more,

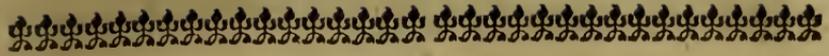
Consider, that if, during the course of this mortal life, and of your Ministerial Labours, you study to shew yourself approved unto God, great will be your reward in heaven. And how much better is it to have our reward laid up there, than to enjoy it here upon earth? This is our anchor sure and steadfast, which keeps the mind from fluctuating in this unquiet stormy world. You shall have praise of God for your diligence, and faithfulness, and sincere

cere endeavours to know and do his will, whether you have praise of men, or no. It is a small matter for you, or me, or any other person, to be judged of man's judgment; he that judgeth us is the Lord. And when God justifieth, who is he that condemneth? Those very things that were the great articles upon which men accused, reviled, and condemned us, (if for conscience towards God, we suffer wrongfully) will be mentioned to our honour at last; not without a silent reproach to those, otherwise good men, who hearkening too much to their passions, were not so just, much less so kind, to their fellow-servants as they ought to have been. Did ever Master pay his servants as our great Lord will do his, with honour in the presence of all his angels, with rest from all their labours, with an inheritance incorruptible, and a crown of righteousness and glory that fadeth not away?

Wherefore, wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart. You have the prayers of your Brethren in the Ministry, and of the Church of God that you may obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful; and have your faithfulness rewarded with a great deal of comfort and success. Stir up the gifts of God that are in you. Cherish in yourself those noble principles of love to God, to Jesus,
and

and to the souls of men. Persuaded of the excellency of a beneficent temper, of the worth of souls, which are immortal, and the worthlessness of a dying world, esteem it the greatest happiness of your life, and most acceptable way of glorifying, imitating, and serving God, to do good to men, especially in their highest interests. Be kind to the unkind, have charity for the uncharitable, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men; and by manifestation of the truth, let it be your aim to commend yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. In a word, take heed to the Ministry which you have received of the Lord to fulfill it; and, that you may not be too much affected with the difficulties and discouragements you meet with, frequently think of the superior goodness of the work to which you have devoted yourself, the assistance and pleasure you will have in it, if you are sincere, and the infinite greatness of the promised reward.





*The End supposed to be aimed at by
a faithful Minister of the Gospel,
explained, and recommended in*

A

CHARGE

Delivered at the

ORDINATION

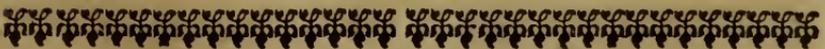
Of the REVEREND

Mr. Daniel Harson,

AT

Moreton-Hampstead, Devon.

July 27, 1737.



THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF CHARLES THE SECOND

A

CHARLES

THE SECOND

ORDINATION

OF A

Mt. Daniel Haynes

AT

Marion-Hampstead, Devon.

July 27, 1737.

Printed by J. Sturges, at the Press of the University of Cambridge.



*The End supposed to be aimed at
by a faithful Minister of the Gos-
pel, &c.*

AS the truth of the *Christian Religion* appears in the superior excellence of its doctrines and precepts, and the excellence of these in their manifest tendency to promote the glory of God, and the happiness of mankind; so the great usefulness of the *Christian Ministry* is alike obvious to all considering persons, from the original design of it, to instruct men in this excellent, this divine, Religion, and to persuade them to live agreeably to it, in certain hope of the reward of eternal life through *Jesus Christ* our *Lord*: the serious thought of which must yield very great satisfaction to all sincere, intelligent, Christians. And I particularly mention it for your encouragement, Sir, who have been now separated to this sacred office, as well as theirs who have called you to labour among them in the word and doctrine, and of any others that are present,

present, and witnesses on this solemn occasion.

When, with the dignity and importance of the pastoral care, there is a happy concurrence of the qualifications of the persons devoting themselves to it (which we have good reason to think is the case here) no prospect can be more agreeable, no juster ground of rejoicing, to the Church of Christ.

In the few things of which I would briefly put you in remembrance at this time, I shall take my rise from the Apostle *Paul's* exhortation to his Son *Timothy*, 1 Eph. iv. 16.

TAKE HEED TO THY SELF, AND TO THY DOCTRINE; CONTINUE IN THEM; FOR IN DOING THIS, THOU SHALT BOTH SAVE THYSELF, AND THEM THAT HEAR THEE.

You see, Sir, here is the *end* supposed to be aimed at by a faithful Minister of the Gospel; *viz. his own salvation, and the salvation of those that hear him*; together with the means prescribed for the attainment of it, *taking heed to himself and to his doctrine*; in doing which, and so continuing, he hath the prospect of success to excite and inspire him.

Can there be a nobler end, and of nearer concernment to us all, than that here proposed?

posed? For by *salvation*, in the *Gospel* sense of the word, every one knows the highest happiness to be understood of which man is capable; the utmost perfection of all his faculties, and affluence of the most satisfying delights, in the presence and enjoyment of God to eternity: for he is both the sole *author* and the supreme *object* of this felicity, to whom, as the eternal fountain of all good, be glory forever. It is ^a *to the praise of the glory of his grace, that he hath made us accepted in the Beloved*. The glory of his attributes is the final result of all his works, of *Creation*, *Providence*, and *Redemption*; in which therefore we are to terminate our regard.

And when we consider the necessity of making each of these a part of our *chief end*, with the inseparable connection, and natural subordination, there is betwixt them; it must appear strange, that in a case so plain, and where all sides appeal to *Reason* and *Scripture* as the common rule of decision, there should be such a diversity (I was going to have said contrariety) in the sentiments of men about these things: or, if not in their *sentiments themselves*, yet in their manner of explaining them; one representing *self-love*, another *benevolence*, a third a *zeal for the glory of God*, as in effect the *sole principle* which over-rules and
 swal-

^a Eph. i. 6.

swallows up the other two. Which, perhaps, may *in part* be owing to their not attending to the following plain distinction, *viz.* that, if we speak of their respective *dignity* and *importance*, it must be acknowledged, that the first in order is the *glory of God*, next to that the *general good*, and in the third and last place *private felicity*. But if we consider the natural progress of the mind in its operations, we begin with seeking our own happiness, then, together with our ideas, enlarge our desires too, to the happiness of others; and from thence rise to the glory of God, as the furthest limit of our view; while, from an inward conviction of the necessary relation between them, and the mutual happy influence they have upon one another, we jointly pursue all three. Nor is there any need of our being solicitous about the respective degree of strength with which they act upon us; this being an inquiry more curious than useful, and, generally speaking, not so very easy to be resolved. It is enough, that each of them powerfully determines us, and in perfect concert with the other two.

Thou shalt save thyself. This is one part of the motive made use of by the Apostle in order to engage *Timothy* to the vigorous discharge of his duty; not barely signifying what would be the effect of his taking the course here directed to (of which afterwards)

but

but what he might and ought to *propose to himself*, and what the Apostle takes it for granted he did propose, for his encouragement in well-doing.

Self-love is an original affection of our nature; and the proper object of *self-love* is *self-interest*; or happiness, *truly so called*. Nor does Religion aim to extinguish this natural principle in us, or oblige us to endeavour it, but only teach us how to make a right use of it, by the knowledge it gives us of our chief good, and final felicity.

Regard that as your highest interest, which is really such; aspire to the happiness set before you in the Gospel; and then, that you are *self-interested*, in this sense of the word, will be not your crime, but your virtue, a commendation, not a reproach; not in the least interfering with the desire of pleasing and glorifying God, and contributing to the happiness of your fellow-creatures, but adding fresh life and strength to it. Unless you are concerned for your own real happiness, you will never be so for that of others; nor for the honour of the Supreme Being, of whom you can have no very exalted apprehensions, while you represent him not to yourself as the original fountain of perfection and happiness to his intelligent creatures. Nothing will awaken the mind of man, naturally indolent and sluggish, like the prospect of an
eternal

eternal heaven, the abode of holy and happy spirits, of sacred joys, and everlasting rest; the hope of arriving at these blessed mansions, on the one hand, and the fear of coming short of them, on the other. Knowing the *mercies* and the *terrors* of the *Lord*, you will be the more earnest to persuade men to *flee from the wrath to come*, and to *lay hold on eternal life*.

Begin therefore with the care of your own soul. Consider well its nature and dignity, forget not its danger; labour after the assurance of your own interest in the favour of God, and title to the promised reward; and the peace and satisfaction hence resulting will infuse a strange vigour into your faculties, quicken your zeal and alacrity in the service of your heavenly Master, and render every part of your work much more easy and delightful.

Nor is there any fear of your over-doing it; or occasion for your distinguishing so nicely, as some have done, betwixt being influenced by the consideration of your own happiness, *as your own*, and *as a part* of the happiness of the *whole*, or a means of advancing the *glory of God*; the latter of which they contend for, without allowing of the former: this is refining upon things till the very substance of them is quite gone, and can answer no end, that I see, but making some persons *conceited*, with an imagination

gination of their having soared so much above the common pitch, and others sad, that ought not to be made so. When we are enjoined to love our neighbour as ^b ourselves (not more than ourselves) and have the example of *Moses*, and of a much greater than *Moses*, our *blessed Lord*, recorded for our imitation, one of whom chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, because he had ^c respect to the recompence of reward, the other for the ^d joy set before him, willingly endured the cross, despising the shame; in these, and so in other places, we have our duty simply proposed to us, without the least hint of any danger we are in of loving ourselves too well, and setting too high a value upon our own happiness, so as to pass over the love of God, and our neighbour.

You need not be told, that as a *Christian*, and much more as a *Christian Minister*, you should extend your good wishes and endeavours yet further, and seek to save others as well as yourself. *Thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee.* Provided you are really solicitous about your own salvation, any such admonition as this will be little wanted. You will not, you cannot, in that case have respect to your *own things* only, but will also *mind the things of others*; the very nature of these spiritual

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and

and eternal things being such, that the greater the number of the communicants is, the greater in some sense is the share of every one, at least as to the satisfaction he hath in them. And, there being one heart and one soul, no one saith that ought of the things he possesses is his own, but the joy of one is the joy of all. Which, by the way, is a thought that does not much favour the *narrow scheme*, which contracts the bounds of the divine mercy, and supposes the *grace* to be the greater for the fewness of those to whom it is shewn; as if the happiness of heaven was not a social thing; and the command ^e *to rejoice with them that rejoice*, did not imply that our joy, and consequently our obligation to the great author of it, is not the less, but the greater for the extensiveness of the divine bounty and goodness. I cannot forbear thinking, that had men a greater largeness of heart, their *notions* of the love of God would ordinarily be larger too; the defect never lying on God's part.

Let me add, while you are earnestly contending *to save yourself*, and *them that bear you*, and todo all the good you can to all, what you feel in your own breast will be a sufficient conviction of the falsity of their notion, who assert all *benevolence* to be nothing else but *self-love* in disguise, differing
from

from what is commonly so called, only in this, that in one case self-love goes more *directly* to its end, in the other more round about, by the way of common good, which it considers and values merely as a means of private happiness. Only observe the workings of your own mind, and you will find this to be a gross misrepresentation of human nature, and exceeding unjust; for though *self-love* be in nature prior to every other affection, and a man supposed not to love himself, could not love any person or thing besides; because having no happiness of his own, he could have no notion what the happiness of another meant, nor indeed any such principle as love and desire in his nature; yet the idea of *benevolence*, or the good-will we bear to others, is plainly distinct from that of *self-love*, and may be proved to be so by the pleasure immediately arising from the happiness of our fellow-creatures, especially when in a great degree owing to us; for which pleasure there would be no room, supposing every man were conscious to himself, that the happiness or misery of all other persons were alike indifferent to him, any further than his own happened to be connected with theirs; like those who, being embarked in the same vessel, and joint sharers in the profits of the voyage, should heartily wish the preservation of the ship, and help towards it, but

each with a view only to himself, otherwise not in the least concerned whether it arrived safe to the intended haven, or sunk to the bottom of the ocean.

Social affections are a credit to human nature. There is a pleasure in the exercise of them, where only some inferior good is to be procured; but the divinest satisfaction is when we befriend others in respect of their highest, their eternal, interests. The *salvation of souls* is a glorious end indeed, the vast importance of the ministerial office is never more conspicuous than in this way of considering it; as in this view of it, every one who engages in it with right aims, and hath generous affections beating in his breast, must be *disposed*, as well as reckon himself *obliged*, to do his utmost to prevent the misery and ruin of his fellow-christians; those especially of whom he hath a more particular charge, and to direct, and quicken, and assist them in their pursuit after everlasting happiness. If the gain of the whole world cannot countervail the loss of a single soul, what more worthy the ambition of a truly great mind, than not to save one soul only (though that would richly reward the pains taken to this end) but many souls from death, and to conduct them in the paths of righteousness and immortality? Think of this, and you will hardly need any other motive to the
faithful

faithful discharge of your duty.—And yet I cannot forbear mentioning this further consideration, that in labouring for the salvation of immortal souls, you will have the noblest of all examples, that of the Son of God, the great friend and lover of souls, to animate you, who for the redemption of the world, lapsed into a state of extreme ignorance and corruption, and to recover that immortality which was lost by the sin of man, became incarnate and died. This was the travel of his soul, to ransom the souls of men; the effect of which when he sees he is satisfied, ^f finding the pleasure of the Lord to prosper in his hand, and blessed with a numerous seed of righteous persons like himself, prepared to enjoy those glorious rewards which he procures for, and will finally bestow upon them.—Though this single instance of love to the souls of men exceeds all others taken together, and should, and will, have more weight with every one truly devoted to the service of his great Lord, yet it may not be amiss, nay it may be of great use, to recollect any other examples of this kind in a lower sphere; especially that of the Apostle *Paul*, who writing to the *Philippians* appeals to God as his record, how earnestly ^g *he longed after them all in the bowels of Christ*; tells the *Corinthians*, that ^h *they were in his heart to*

P 3

die

^f Isaiah liii. 10, 11. ^g Phil. i. 8. ^h 2 Cor. vii. 3.

die and to live with them; and the *Theſſaloni-ans*, that he reckoned himſelf to live, when they ſtood faſt in the Lord; whoſe ⁱ heart's deſire and prayer to God for *Iſrael* was, that they might be ſaved; ready were it proper, ^k to wiſh himſelf accuſed from *Chriſt* (cut off from all the privileges of external communion with his church) for their ſakes, and by a violent death ^l to be offered up to God on the ſacrifice and ſervice of their faith, whom he had converted to the profeſſion of the Goſpel.

In a word then, the end I ſuppoſe you to have in view, viz. everlaſting happineſs or ſalvation, both your own and that of others, with the glory of God as the ſupreme author, conductor, and finiſher of this vaſt deſign, muſt, duly conſidered, prove a mighty incentive to diligence and reſolution in the uſe of all thoſe means by which it is accompliſhed.

And what the principal of theſe means are, in reſpect of the part which the Miniſters of the Goſpel have in the converſion and ſalvation of ſouls, the Apoſtle hath informed us in theſe words, *Take heed to thyſelf, and to thy doctrine*. For once, ſuppoſe this exhortation directed to you; as in effect it is in the perſon of *Timothy*, and to all others who have taken the paſtoral charge upon them.

Take

† *I Theſ.* iii. 8. ^k *Rom.* x. i. ix. 3. † *Phil.* ii. 17.

Take heed unto yourself. In general, that your character, as a sincerely good man, a disciple of Christ indeed, be unexceptionable; and, more particularly, that you do not come behind in certain virtues which are likely to have a peculiarly good influence in this matter.

In general, you are to take heed that your character, as a person of true christian integrity, be unblemished. Every Minister of the Gospel ought to be *a good man*; this qualification is indispensable. It was formally, by the *Heathens* themselves, thought a necessary qualification for their accomplished Orator, that he should be so; much more then must this be necessary for the *Christian Orator*, whose sole business almost lies in persuading men to be good, that they may be happy. I must be sure not to want that myself, of the absolute necessity of which I am continually endeavouring to convince others; and, while I warn them against being deceived with a wrong notion of genuine vital Religion, or of their own state and condition, not to be mistaken myself in these things, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.

Nay, simply to be good should not content you, but you should endeavour to excel; to have the evidence of your sincerity as bright and strong, and the objections

against it as few as may be. This is the more needful, not only that you may be an example to the flock, which every Minister ought to be, and teach men their duty with the greater force and authority, but to put to silence the enemies of Religion; shall I say, only, or likewise add some of the *friends* of it too? I fear this latter is too often the case, in the present divided state of the Christian Church; that which would otherwise be a sufficient proof of a man's goodness in the judgment of common charity, not passing for such among those who do not so well like him on some other accounts. To bear down such prejudices, a person must not have many failings and blemishes; little less than demonstration being admitted, sometimes, by good men one of another, when they do not serve in the same party. Why, since they are thus unreasonable, demonstration let them have, as far as you are capable of giving it, that what they will not grant out of *charity* and *equity*, they may be obliged to do from the irresistible force of *conviction*.

There are certain virtues which you should more peculiarly cultivate, as they are likely to have a particularly good influence in this matter. Such, among others, are humility and meekness, temperance, sincerity, a contempt of every thing mean and sordid, a peaceable temper, charity, courage

courage in a good cause, and, to add no more, prudence.

The more humble and meek you are, so as to keep your self-esteem, and your anger, within due bounds, the more you will resemble your great Lord and Master, in whom these amiable qualities were so distinguishing, that he invites his followers to learn them from his example^m. Maintain a wise sobriety of mind, and shew it in your outward behaviour, neither assuming honours and preeminences which do not belong to you, nor unseasonably and importunately challenging those that do; but rather leaving others to find out, and freely acknowledge what is valuable in you, than pointing it out to them, and thereby making them think you are too sensible of it yourself.

Thus you will enjoy a rest and tranquillity of soul, which you must not otherwise hope for, and rise higher in favour both with God and man, according to our Saviour's observation, that *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. Despise none, and you will not be despised by any. Command your own passions, and you will have the greater ascendant over the passions of other men.

A well-regulated temperance in respect of the pleasures of sense, alike remote from a superstitious austerity on the one hand, and what-

^m Mat. xi. 29.

ⁿ Luke xiv. 11.

whatever borders on too great delicacy or indulgence on the other, will be of use to preserve your faculties in their clearness and vigour, to guard the freedom of your mind, to convince the world that the pleasures of knowledge, of virtue, and devotion, are the proper happiness of the man, and so esteemed by you, and to give you the higher relish of these purer and more sublime delights.

By *simplicity* and *godly sincerity*, a frank open behaviour, void of all guile and artifice, you will at once gain the esteem and love of those you converse with, and be let into their very souls, when they can see into yours; having no reason to suspect you of any design upon them, but what you avow, they will give the greater heed to all you say, as sincerely intended for their good.

Especially, as this *sincerity* is usually, if not always, joined with an *elevation* and *greatness of soul*, that makes a man scorn every thing mean and sordid. One of this character never loves money so well as, for the sake of it, to act a niggardly, unfriendly, dishonourable, not to say an unjust part; and, if he take the oversight of the flock of God, does it not *for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*. He values riches only for their use, not for themselves, and believes that as God knows what portion of these things is safest and best for him upon the whole, he will give it him; considering which, he can

can be contented without them, and, as the consequence of that, will descend to no base arts to get them, and of what he hath (if he hath more than necessaries) will rather be over liberal than too sparing. Nothing makes a man look so truly great in the eyes of the world as this noble disposition, while *covetousness* sinks the character of any man, and most of all of a Minister.

Love follow, and make *peace*. It is the happiest temper, the most divine employment. Besides the reward immediately attending a state of tranquillity, you will have an opportunity of doing more good, *the fruit of righteousness* being, in this sense, *sown in peace*, in a calm halcyon season, *by them that make peace*. There are few things, *truth* and *honesty* excepted, which a man should not be willing to sacrifice for peace-sake. And blessed are all they who are so disposed, ° *for they shall be called the children of God*.

Let your *charity* never fail. Let not a diversity of sentiments (but, because this alone is a small thing, I therefore add) or unfair insinuations and reflections, manifest misrepresentations, or even spiteful and injurious usage, be able to cool, much less to extinguish, this sacred fire in your breast. *Do good to all; think well of as many, and as long as you can; and speak evil of none.*

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Whatever success a blind intemperate zeal may have for a time, *charity* must get the victory in the end.

Nor will your pursuing *peace* and *charity* at all interfere with *boldness* and *courage*, and an *inflexible constancy*, in a good cause. While you allow others a sort of latitude in thinking and acting, according to the different light and manner in which the same things may appear to the minds of sincere Christians themselves, you are not to vary a hair's breadth in your own profession and practice from what you apprehend to be right and true. Be zealous, resolved, and steadfast, though always with a spirit of meekness, and a mind open to conviction, from *whomsoever* or from *whencesoever* it comes. Thus you will best answer the common objection against the advocates for *peace* and *liberty*, and *charity*; that it is not a zeal for these things, but an indifference to the principles of Religion, that is the true spring and reason of their conduct.

Finally; By no means think *prudence*, as long as it is such, and does not degenerate into *craft*, a thing to be ashamed of; but get as much of it as you can, and make as much use of it (always coupling it with *sincerity*) since all you can get will be sure little enough as times and men now are. I will not say, that part of our Saviour's advice

to his Apostles, ^P *be wise as serpents*, is as much in season now at it was at the time of its being first given; but this I will venture to say, that the present is a season in which it can very ill be spared. A man hath occasion for a great deal of *prudence*, that his very good be not *evil spoken of*. So many notions, tempers, passions, interests, prejudices, as a Minister hath to deal with; so many proud, busy, officious, ill-designing men as there are, on the one hand, and so many weak, how well-meaning soever, on the other; in order to keep clear of all offence, he must steer with uncommon caution, and, if possible, make himself a thorough master of the art of *prudence*; the *art* I say, which hath no other bounds but those which the virtue of *prudence* prescribes to it. I pray God to quicken you in the pursuit, and assist you in the attainment of this, and every other good gift; as you have no reason to doubt he will, on condition that, humbly sensible of your dependance upon him, you entreat the illumination and aids of his Spirit, and do not receive them in vain.

The other head of advice is, *Take heed to your doctrine*; that you teach truth, and nothing but truth, if you can help it, at least nothing apparently inconsistent with the fundamental principles of Religion, natural, or revealed; and when I say *apparently*, I mean

mean to every *honest mind*, of *tolerable capacity*, and not *clouded with prejudice*; which too often happens.

But *what is truth?* And *where* shall we find it? As our Saviour foretold, the time would come when they should say, *Lo here is Christ, or Lo he is there*; so fares it with *truth*, amidst the several contending parties in the christian world, each pretending to have the sole possession of the true doctrine of Christ, and the sole right of dispensing it. If you would know the truth, come to us. But I shall venture to say in this, as our blessed Lord did in the other case, *believe it not, go not after them*; which I intend of following them with an implicit faith, and imitating their party-spirit; not against hearing what they have to say for themselves. To seek after truth in this way, laying aside the *Scriptures*, or understanding them by the *comments* of the several parties, would be a desperate undertaking. Nay, I do not see how a man could come to any determination at all, unless he was able to reconcile contradictions, or resolved right or wrong to stick to the side he was bred up in, or which some secular view led him to espouse. Truth is best sought, and easiest found in the *Scriptures themselves*; here therefore you should seek for it, yet so as not to neglect any assistance that offers towards your advancement in this sort of knowledge,

ledge, which is the method you take in the other parts of learning, still reserving a right of judging for yourself upon the whole. Give your attendance to reading, meditate on these things, give yourself in a manner wholly to them; and, as the reward of your thus diligently searching the *Scriptures* with a pure, an upright, and a humble mind, you may reasonably expect to succeed better, and to have greater degrees of the divine acceptance and illumination, than in any other method. Honest men that think for themselves, will value you the more for doing what they themselves have done, though the consequence should be your differing from them in some opinions; and as for the censures of others, who want honesty, or whose notions are not properly their own, but their party's from whom they have taken them, they are not worth regarding.

Besides more *direct evidence*, truth hath very often the advantage of some *marks* by which it is characterised and distinguished from falsehood. *Errors* are apt to clash, and contradict one another, but there is a constant harmony in truth; and therefore the more connected the several parts of your scheme are, and the more support they lend one to the other, and derive from those general principles which are common to every system, so much the better. Where there is a manifest inconsistency between the

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the principles of Religion universally acknowledged amongst Christians, and some other notions which men endeavour to fasten on to them, so that they cohere no better than the iron and clay in the feet of *Nebuchadnezzar's* visionary image, or rather destroy one another, like *fire* and *water* (and it were easy to name some doctrines in which this happens *) you may be sure of the

* That God is a Being of the most perfect rectitude of nature, *infinitely holy, one that loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity*, is a principle acknowledged by all Christians; and yet even among Christians there are those who hold every man's character and actions, good or bad, to be originally owing to the *absolute decree* of God; so that whatever causes the evil action *immediately* flows from, the *will of God* is the *first* and *supreme* cause, in obedience to which all other causes necessarily produce the effects they do, and cannot possibly produce any other: the consistency of which two, *viz.* God's *hatred of sin*, with his *decreeing* or *willing* its existence, they that can shew, are humbly desired to do it.—The same persons profess to believe, agreeably to the general sense of mankind, and the constant language of *Scripture*, that God is *just*, and *good*, and *gracious*, in the highest degree of perfection; notwithstanding which, they suppose the *first man's* disobedience to affect his posterity in such a manner, by *imputation* or *propagation*, that they are *all deserving* of eternal misery, and *much the greater part* of them *actually* suffer it, as the unavoidable consequence of an action which they could not help. Is there no contradiction, I do not say to *infinite goodness*, or to *any goodness*, but to *justice*, in this proceeding? Surely, he must wink hard that does not see it. It is a dictate of universal Reason, that *God is true*, and not denied by those very men, who,

the falsity of all such notions; notwithstanding the unnatural alliance in vain attempted between them and the most sacred truths.

Another mark of *truth* in Religion is, the good influence it hath upon *holiness*, or a right temper of mind, and all the duties and virtues of a christian life. *Practical* truth grows out of *speculative*; at least, can no

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who, at the same time give such a sense to the most solemn, the most express, the most numerous, and most unlimited exhortations, declarations, invitations, entreaties and promises of the word of God, as makes them signify nothing at all, or, what is worse than nothing to the major part of the christian world, serving only to delude them with false hopes now, and to aggravate their condemnation at last.—Either this is representing God as acting inconsistently with sincerity and veracity; or sincerity and dissimulation, veracity and unfaithfulness are the same things.—While, *in words*, all men own the truth of this proposition, that *God is no respecter of persons*, ratified by the consenting voice of *Reason* and *Revelation*, how many *really*, or *in effect*, deny it, by teaching that, in the distribution of final recompences, the foundation of God's different preceeding with the children of men, is not their having acted or not acted according to their different abilities, and improved or not improved the talents committed to them; but their being of a certain number arbitrarily ordained to eternal life, or the contrary? Upon the whole, the peculiar principles of this odd scheme of doctrine are evidently repugnant to the first principles of natural and revealed Religion professedly embraced by all Christians, and therefore must needs be false; and those places of Scripture that seem to favour them ought to be taken in another and milder sense, of which they are easily capable, and which indeed they require, according to all the rules of just and fair construction.

more be hurted by it than one speculative truth can be contrary to, and disproved by another. This is that *sound doctrine* of which the Apostle *Paul* so often speaks in his Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*; as any one may soon convince himself that will but consult the places, particularly 1 *Tim.* i. 10. *Tit.* ii. 1, and following verses. What promotes the morals of the Gospel, and, among these, *relative virtues*, tending to shew the necessity, the advantages, and the loveliness of them, is sound doctrine; whatever, in its *natural consequence*, vacates the obligations to a holy life, and discourages the practice of virtue in the whole, or in any particular branches of it, is contrary to sound doctrine, and can never make a part of the Christian Revelation, which is a doctrine according to godliness*.

Among

* The scheme mentioned in the marginal note just before will, upon trial, be found to stand this test (*viz.* of the natural tendency of doctrines to promote or hinder a good life) no better than it did the former. Whatever principles destroy the very *notion* of moral good and evil, *i. e.* of virtue and vice, holiness and sin, and all *distinction* between them, have a plain tendency to banish virtue or holiness *itself* from the earth; for, if once a man believes that all actions are alike indifferent, as to any moral good or evil that is in them, any praise or blame they deserve, there can be no room for *conscience*, which always supposes an intrinsic immutable difference in actions, and applauds or reproaches men according as they observe or neglect this difference in the conduct of their lives. But are the principles before-mentioned thus subversive of the moral differences of actions? Most certainly. Were there

Among other fruits of sound doctrine, there is one that deserves to be more particularly taken notice of, and that is *love*, the noblest passion of the human soul, and highest perfection

there any thing morally and unchangeably good, it must be a rule of action to God himself; whereas, according to the notion advanced by some men of the *divine Sovereignty*, the supreme Being conducts all his proceedings by mere arbitrary will and pleasure. Again, if all things (*actions as well as events*) are in pursuance of absolute decrees, it is certain that men are not *free agents*; and if men are not *free*, so as to have a *power* to do good or evil, they cannot be *obliged* to do the one, and to forbear the other; nor can any thing they do be properly good or evil, in a *moral sense*, being the pure effect of necessity.—The same principles enervate all the *motives to holiness* from the *perfections* of God, his *goodness* manifested in *Creation*, and in the course of his *Providence*, his *unspeakable love* in giving his *only-begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; the *death of Christ*, and his *love in dying* for us; in a word; from the *promises* and *threatenings* of the Gospel. God, as represented by some, would not be a proper object of our imitation, having no moral perfections for us to imitate; or, which is much the same, we having no ideas of these perfections of holiness, justice, goodness and truth, *as in God*, and no other way to guess at them but by the *effects*, which, if such as are described by these men, would make it the most unsafe and deceitful rule in the world, to act in imitation of the Deity. The goodness of Creation and Providence would quite vanish, as to the *non-elect*, when set over-against the miseries of an everlasting state, to which it was designed to be introductory, and does inevitably lead them: no benefit being intended to the *non-elect* by the *mediation of Christ*, they could be under no *obligation* for it. And as to the *promises* and *threatenings* of the Gospel, the *non-elect* having no concern with the former, nor the *elect* with

fection both of Morality and Religion. Nothing can inspire a *rational love of the Deity*, but *truth*, because nothing else can represent him as truly amiable. Just notions of God do this; while others, instead of cherishing that love of God which casteth out fear, and fills the reasonable mind with the most transporting pleasure in the contemplation of his perfections and works, are, in their own nature, good for nothing else but to beget superstition in some, pride and uncharitableness in others, a secret disgust, or endless doubts and perplexities in others, according to the different tempers of mens minds.—And there is the same difference in respect of *mutual benevolence*, or love to our fellow-creatures, on which some principles have the most friendly; others the most malignant aspect; some soften and enlarge the heart, others harden and contract it; some produce a strong and universal

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the latter, one of them would be without *hope*, the other without *fear*, one of them *desperate*, the other *secure*, according to mens believing themselves to be in one or the other class. And should it be suggested, that the decree is unknown to them; the answer is easy, that they know thus much, that whatever it be, it will certainly take place in its proper time, any thing they do, or can do, notwithstanding. The consequence of all which is, that the restraints from evil, and all motives to that which is good, being removed, men, following these principles, would give a loose to their passions, and be much worse than they now are. Whereas, did they act up to the contrary doctrines, man would bear a very great resemblance to God, and earth to heaven.

attraction among souls, others change the attractive into a repelling quality. The former notions are certainly true, the latter as undoubtedly false*.

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* Such are the notions which have been tried by the two former marks; they are inconsistent with the most evident dictates of Reason, and destructive of sound Morals. I now add, fatal above all, to *love*. Is the belief of God's having appointed one man to salvation, another to damnation, without any reason for it in the persons themselves, only because he will do it, a proper foundation to be laid for *the love of God*, whether we take that word as signifying a delightful veneration of God's perfections, or grateful sense of his goodness to us? No, certainly; not even on supposition I am fully persuaded of my being in the number of the chosen few. Since, if I rightly consider it, I can never approve a conduct in the greatest of beings, and in the highest instances, the lowest degrees of which I should abhor and condemn in any other. The greater the Being, and the more extensive and terrible the desolation made by his arbitrary decrees, the more displeasing, instead of lovely and venerable, must his character appear. And as to his benefits, how great soever, being conferred, not from any delight he takes in my happiness, but with the very same design as he makes others miserable, that is, purely to shew his irresistible power, they cannot inspire love: much less shall I be disposed to love God, if under an uncertainty of my election; and least of all can I be obliged to love God, or capable of doing it, if I think myself reprobated by him. By the way, this shews the difficulty, if not impossibility of proving our election upon rational grounds, according to these principles. I have no good reason to conclude myself elected of God, unless I love him; and I cannot love him except I first believe myself elected, *i. e.* according to this scheme, not to be arbitrarily rejected by him.—As for the love of our neighbour, what support can that receive from these ill-natured principles?

The next care to that of teaching the truth, and nothing else, ought to be, to insist most frequently and most earnestly on those truths that are most *necessary*, most *useful*, most *seasonable*. *Necessary* as essential, or at least very important points of the Christian Revelation, without which the general doctrine of the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, and the wisdom of God in the Gospel-constitution, cannot so well be apprehended: *Useful*, for enlightning the mind, informing the conscience, purifying the heart, regulating the passions, and directing the course of the life; and *seasonable*, by being adapted to the necessities, the characters, and the circumstances of hearers.

And that the truth may lose nothing by the *manner* of communicating it, you must be sensible that way ought to be chosen in which it is conveyed with the greatest *clearness* to the *conceptions* of men, the most convincing *evidence* to their *judgments*, and the most forcible
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Will not those, whose *inclinations* agree too well with their principles, think themselves justified to hate whom they believe God to hate, and be apt to make a sort of merit of conforming their wills and their conduct to his? — On the contrary, when we believe the mercies of God to be over all his works, and his intention to save all who, by their obstinate continuance in sin, do not exclude themselves from the common salvation, the thoughts of such a glorious design naturally dilate the heart in love to God and man, and place all men in the most amiable point of view, as good, or capable of being so, and our companions in bliss for ever.

and winning *addresses* to their *affections*; to the intent they may at once discern the truth, receive it in the love thereof, and be ingaged to resolve and act agreeably to it. When your own thoughts of things are just and distinct, and your words and expressions, which are the dress of the thoughts, like a transparent veil, do not hide your meaning, but let it be plainly seen through; when you neither treat your subjects in such a cold dry argumentative way as if you were talking of things of no importance to yourself or hearers, and the truth had no charms but for the understanding; nor yet raise the affections without laying an answerable foundation in the judgment to support them, but endeavour to have a proper mixture of strength and sweetness of light and warmth in your discourses; it is then you are likely to do most service to truth, and to the souls of men. Reason and argument there must be, or we do not deal with mankind as reasonable beings: but Reason itself dictates that there ought to be something besides, because *human nature* is not made up entirely of Reason, but of Reason and Affection.

Some other things might be named, to which you should, and I hope will take heed; such as performing all the parts of publick worship in a decent and edifying manner, agreeable to the *Scripture rule*, and the nature of *Gospel institutions*: privately conversing with, advising, admonishing, and comforting your

flock, as there is occasion; constantly in your secret devotions, and making them subservient and preparatory to your publick work. But I shall content myself to have just mentioned these things, not only because the Apostle saith nothing of them in this place, but also and chiefly because of their visible dependance upon what hath been before said; it being impossible that a pious Minister, who hath a due concern for his own and the salvation of his hearers, and labours to conform his faith as well as his life to the *holy Scriptures*, should be careless and indifferent about his publick ministrations, or any thing else that may forward or prejudice his principal design.

I have very little time left to consider the success promised to the steady observation of the method here laid down. *Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine, continue in them; for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* The saving yourself and others is supposed to be the *great end* you have in view (as was said before) and it seems in this way you have the greatest probability of attaining what you aim at; for though men of very indifferent lives may sometimes be instrumental in saving others by the goodness of their doctrine, and some who hold pernicious doctrines may do much by the goodness of their lives, and the influence of those truths which are mingled with their

rors *, yet it may justly be expected, that the greatest execution will be done, where both these, a good conversation and good doctrine, are found united. Not that the effect, after all, will follow, as to the salvation of others, without their concurrence, in which they are free ; but because, having taken the course now mentioned, you have discharged your duty, which is all that you are answerable for, so as to have rejoicing in yourself, and a humble assurance that your reward is with God, and have used the most probable means of bringing your hearers to concur with you ; since *truth* and *goodness* are the best engines we can employ in laying siege to the hearts of men :

* It was promised by our Saviour to his first disciples, that if *they drank any deadly thing it should not hurt them*. We may say something like this of the pernicious doctrines embraced by some good men. They embrace them, and yet are not hurt by them ; nay, and notwithstanding them, are, it may be, useful to others, among whom they at once propagate their *virtues* and their *mistakes*. But then, as in the former case, what the disciples drank was nevertheless *deadly* in its own nature, because the operation of it was prevented by *miracle* ; so here, mens escaping an hurt themselves, and being the instrument of good to others, is no argument of the *innocence*, much less the *usefulness*, of their notions. They may be exceeding pernicious in themselves for all that ; only, an honest heart, and the virtue of some excellent truths, like a vigorous antidote, happily counter-act them. A noble medicine may cure, notwithstanding some improper ingredients mixed up with it ; yet still we should be very much mistaken to attribute the good effect of the medicine to these ingredients, which, at best, help nothing towards it, perhaps, very much diminish it.

men: nor as if, where the effect does follow, we were to ascribe the glory of it to *men*, but to *God*, by whose *Word* and *Spirit* it is brought about. The necessity of the divine assistance, or co-operation, is one of those things which they that take heed to their doctrine will not fail to teach and inculcate; but then as this assistance is *necessary*, so it may be *depended on* by all those, whether Ministers or private Christians, who sincerely pray for it, and faithfully improve it, though they are not without their imperfections.

Upon the whole. What an excellent work is it you are engaged in! And what a glorious prospect lies before you! Enough to put life and spirit into your endeavours, and to render *labour* itself a *pleasure*. That God may guide, assist, comfort, and prosper you in the future course of your ministry, is my heart's desire and prayer to God for you; to which, I doubt not, all this numerous assembly of Christians will say, *Amen*.





Q U E R I E S

Proposed to the

C O N S I D E R A T I O N

Of all such as think it

A N I N J U R Y T O R E L I G I O N

To shew the

Reasonableness of it.

In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

1732.



THE
SERIES

CONTENTS

THE HISTORY OF THE

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TO THE
R E A D E R.

*T*HE offence taken at a passage or two in an Ordination Sermon *, being that which gave rise to the following Queries, it is hoped the Reader will not be displeas'd to have the obnoxious passages laid before him; especially when some of the Queries cannot be so fully understood without them.

‘ We should take all opportunities of shewing them [our hearers] the excellency of the doctrines and precepts of our holy Religion, (which, by the way, makes a part of the proof of its truth;) and observing to them how admirably they all conspire in one great end, the glory of God, and the perfection and happiness of man. It should be our endeavour to convince them of the reasonableness of those duties that are required of them, and the goodness of God in requiring them.— It became Christ, as a Lawgiver, to teach
‘ with

* For the Rev. Mr. Amory, and the Rev. Mr. Cornish.
Vol. I. p. 467.

' with authority; letting men know what God
 ' required of them, and what they, according
 ' to their behaviour, might expect from God;
 ' without entering into the particular rea-
 ' sons of his commands, and proving the di-
 ' vine original of his doctrine from a distinct
 ' consideration of its nature and tendency, tho'
 ' he himself hints at this. And much the same
 ' method is taken in those sacred Writings by
 ' which the Christian Revelation is conveyed
 ' down to us. The doctrine they contain is
 ' perfectly reasonable; but there is very little
 ' reasoning upon it. This part is left to those
 ' who are only the Expounders of the Scripture
 ' Revelation, and who owe it to the Author of
 ' their Faith, to the Faith itself, and to them
 ' that believe, to trace and mark out those foot-
 ' steps of the divine holiness, wisdom, and good-
 ' ness, that are so conspicuous in the frame of
 ' our Religion.'—And further on in the
 ' Sermon — ' If it be granted that there
 ' is a real sanctifying virtue in the Gospel, un-
 ' der the influences of the holy Spirit, this vir-
 ' tue must proceed from a fitness in the doctrines
 ' and precepts of the Gospel, to beget in us the
 ' love of God; and of those qualities and ac-
 ' tions that will render us like God: which
 ' love must be the effect of a conviction, that
 ' the things which the Gospel ascribes to God are
 ' adorable perfections, and requires of man,
 ' in order to his resembling of God, are, in their
 ' own nature, lovely and excellent. Even the
 ' pro-

' promises and threatnings of the Gospel, do
 ' not perhaps so directly influence the conver-
 ' sion of the heart to God, and our endeavours
 ' after holiness; but rather, indirectly, as they
 ' work upon our passions, and thereby ingage us
 ' to consider more seriously and attentively than
 ' we should otherwise do, the reasonableness of
 ' Religion; the intrinsick value and native beauty
 ' of holiness, and great excellence of all those
 ' divine and spiritual attainments which Cris-
 ' tianity obliges us to aspire after.'

The Reader will judge whether there be any
 thing so criminal, or doubtful, in these pas-
 sages, as to call for an apology or explanation.

The Author of the Queries is sensible he
 could have reduced them to a smaller number;
 but he considered that they were likely to be
 of more use to the generality of readers in the
 present form, in which the thoughts are drawn
 out, and placed in different lights, than they
 would have been, had the thoughts been crowd-
 ed into a very narrow compass, and rather implied
 than expressed.

He hath one more favour to beg, and that
 is, that having, in reading a Reformation-
 Sermon by Dr. Wishart, lately published, among
 many other things excellently observed by that
 judicious Divine, been particularly struck with
 the representation there made, of the mischiefs
 attending the neglect of a rational and virtuous
 Education, he may be pardoned the liberty he
 hath

bath taken to transcribe a part of it, being so agreeable to his own sentiments and design.—‘ I speak it with very great concern; I cannot help being apprehensive that the looseness and debauchery so much lamented in many, who are observed to have had a religious Education, may often be found to proceed, in a great measure, from that very Education itself, as it is managed: for I may appeal to attentive observers, whether that which obtains the name of a religious Education, does not often turn out in such a shape as this? The care of Parents or Instructors, about the religious part of Education, is almost wholly spent in inculcating upon young ones the Shibboleth of a Party; making them acquainted with, and instilling into them a regard for the particular doctrines, or peculiar forms of their own sect; in which there may oft-times be found a mixture of things absurd or trifling; which yet are inculcated with as great earnestness, and by the same methods, with the most weighty and important points;— and instead of forming their minds to a rational sense of good and evil, a taste and relish for true piety and virtue, upon such principles as will stand the test of a most strict examination; any instances of good practice they are taught, are recommended and enforced by mere authority, or by the awe of future rewards and punishments; which, as they are made use of, without ever explaining the nature and justice of them, can

' contribute no more to promote a liberal piety
 ' and virtue, a relish for true goodness, and
 ' savour of honesty in the mind, than whips
 ' and sugar-plumbs: while, in all the offices of
 ' Religion to which they are accustomed, they
 ' are detained before the Lord against their
 ' will; forced to run the round of certain
 ' forms they know no good in; no care being taken
 ' to instil into them a just sense of true piety and
 ' devotion, or a regard to any valuable purpose
 ' in such observances, save only the pleasing of
 ' their Parents; whose devotion and piety at the
 ' same time they observe to be exerted in such
 ' a way, as tends to give them no amiable and
 ' inviting, but rather a disgusting and for-
 ' bidding view of it. —Is this to train up a
 ' Child in the way that he should go? —
 ' When a creature (thus neglected shall I say,
 ' or rather) with great care misguided, comes
 ' to be emancipated from such fetters, and get
 ' rid of such awkward restraints; when the raw
 ' unformed Youth comes once (as perhaps with
 ' a scanty portion of understanding, and very
 ' slender exercise of Reason he may) to discover a
 ' flaw or weakness in some things, that, it may
 ' be, he hath been taught to look upon as equally
 ' sacred with God and virtue, goodness and ho-
 ' nesty, must it not be natural for him, upon
 ' such a discovery, with the concurrence of wild
 ' passions, used to no regular government, to draw
 ' very general and hasty conclusions, and to
 ' throw up at once every thing he hath been for-
 '

‘merly taught, and which his Education hath
‘furnished him with nothing to say for, more
‘than for some things he hath now found to be
‘trifling and absurd?’

Here may it not be justly made a Query,
Whether Parents and Instructors were not first
led into this error, in the Education of Children,
by Divines? And, whether therefore these latter,
as they led them in, are not concerned to do their
endeavour to lead them out of it again?





Q U E R I E S

Proposed to the

CONSIDERATION &c.

Q U E R Y I.

IS not *Reason* that faculty of the mind by which we perceive the truth or falshood of Propositions (as well as their meaning) that is, indeed, the evidence of their truth or falshood? Even shewing the *reasonableness* of things, what is it else but shewing the *truth* of some Proposition relating to their reasonableness? As he that *proves* or *sees* the reasonableness of *gratitude*, does, in effect, prove or see the *truth* of this Proposition, that *gratitude is a reasonable thing*. Is not this a right notion of *Reason*? And is there any thing of *carnality* in *Reason* thus explained? Is not *carnal Reason*, in this sense of the word, a contradiction in terms? There

being, in fact, no worse foes to Reason, or greater hinderances and obstructions in reasoning, especially concerning matters of Religion, than those which the *Scripture* calls the *lusts* and the *works* of the flesh.

Q U E R Y II.

Is not *Reason* a gift of God with which we ought, in the best manner we can, to glorify the giver? And do we not then glorify God with our Reason, when we trace and mark out those footsteps of the divine wisdom, holiness, and goodness, which are so conspicuous in the frame of our Religion? *Wisdom is justified of her children*; how, but by their having right apprehensions themselves of the wisdom of God in his *Dispensations* and *Laws*, and becoming advocates for them to others? And in what way can this be done without *reasoning*?

Q U E R Y III.

Is not *Reason* one way of God's speaking to men, as *Revelation* is another? If so; after God hath spoken to us by *Revelation*, are we no longer to attend to him, as he speaks to us, and instructs us, by our *Reason*? Why? If he does not speak *contrary* things; which cannot be affirmed without blasphemy.

Q U E R Y IV.

Is it not our duty to honour God as our Creator and Governor? And of this are we not more capable, when we observe that the *Nature* and the *Laws* which he hath given us, are more exactly adapted to each other, so as to produce an immediate connection between our duty and our happiness? And what else is this but *reasoning in Religion*?

Q U E R Y V.

In respect of all the *Moral Precepts* of the Gospel, is not the Will of God founded in the *Reason of things*? In other words; is not the reasonableness of some actions, and the unreasonableness of some others, one ground, at least, of God's commanding *those* and forbidding *these*? And may we not allowably make that a reason for our doing a thing which is God's reason for commanding it?

Q U E R Y VI.

Does not what we call the *excellency* of the *Christian Religion* depend, in a great measure, on the *reasonableness* of it? And is not that man then the best judge of its excellence (*cæteris paribus*) who most clearly discerns its reasonableness? And, this being granted, does he not do good service to Religion by shewing it to be reasonable?

Q U E R Y VII.

Are *miracles* alone as strong a proof of the truth of *Christianity*, as miracles in conjunction with the *Nature* of its *Doctrines* and *Precepts*? If not, how is this proof from the *Doctrines* and *Precepts* to be managed, without entering, more or less, into the consideration of the reasonableness of the *Precepts*; the usefulness of the *Doctrines* to enforce them, together with their agreeableness to, or, at least, their consistency with, the principles of right Reason? Or, laying aside all *external evidence* from miracles, as well as *intrinsic* from the *Doctrine*, are we to trust entirely to the inward *testimony of the Spirit*? They that assert this, will do well to explain what they mean by the *testimony of the Spirit*, and to reflect on the dangerous consequences of their notion.

Q U E R Y VIII.

Is there not an *order* in duties? And are there not *degrees* in the guilt of sins? How is this to be discovered and fixed, but by *Reason*?

Q U E R Y IX.

Are not the love of God and our neighbour, and living soberly, righteously, and
godly,

godly, the sum and substance of *practical Religion*? And are not a great many good reasons to be given for all these, from the nature of the duties themselves? And when such reasons can be given, ought they not to be given? Is it not for the *glory of God* they should?

Q U E R Y X.

Is not the *Christian Religion* a more perfect Dispensation than the *Law of Moses*, consider'd as a *reasonable Service*? But if we make the *mere Will of God* the *entire Ratio* of both, wherein will the mighty difference appear between them? Or, how is the *Gospel* the *good*, and *perfect*, and *acceptable Will of God*, any more than the *Law*?

Q U E R Y XI.

Were a Minister to preach on the following *Texts*, and a great many others like them, could he do it to any good purpose, without *Reasoning*? *In keeping of them* (the Commandments of God) *there is great reward. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. He that sineth against me wrongeth his own soul. My yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled. Whatsoever things are true, ve-*

nerable, just, pure, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think of those things.

Q U E R Y XII.

Is a man's acting out of regard to the *Reason of the thing*, inconsistent with his having a proper respect to the *Will and Authority of God*? On the contrary, the greater the necessity and importance of a thing is by Reason discovered to be, is not that thing more *apparently* the Will of God? This being supposed; who conforms most exactly to the Will of God, and is most likely to be vigorous and steady in the practice of his duty, *he* that acts with a view to the several reasons and motives of action that are of weight, doing what God wills, because he wills it, and for the same reasons that he wills it, as far as they appear; or *he* that only considers the thing as commanded? Will not this latter be more apt, under a strong temptation, to question, whether he hath not mistaken the meaning of the command; or whether the command may not be dispensed with, never having considered the *morality* of it, and the *unchangeable nature of moral good and evil*?

Q U E R Y XIII.

Was it possible that the *Christian Church* should have been overspread so early with the grossest

grossest corruptions in Doctrine and Worship, if men had made a right use of their *Bibles* and *Reason*, and *judged for themselves*, not *blindly* following their *blind* Guides? Or could they believe and hold fast the plainest inconsistencies, which hath been formerly done, and is so still, if Reason were not discarded; which would convince them that Propositions *true* and *false* about the *same thing*, the *best* of principles with some of the *worst*, were not fit company to lodge together in the same head? St. *Austin*, when a *Manichee*, was a believer of two opposite and coeternal principles of things, the one *good*, the other *evil*: afterwards, when a *Catholick*, he asserted the unity of the first principle; but by representing every thing that is done as the accomplishment of an absolute decree, he did, in effect, teach that the sovereignly good Being was the uncontrollable author both of good and evil. And must not a man silence his Reason, before he can entertain such an inconsistent notion, that the *fountain of living waters* does at once send forth *sweet water* and *bitter*?

Q U E R Y XIV.

Is there not a *fitness* in the *Doctrines* and *Precepts* of the Gospel to beget in us the love of God, and of those qualities and actions which will render us like God? And does not
their

their fitness, as *means* to this *end*, arise from their apparent *goodness* and *reasonableness*? As to the *promises* and *threatenings* of the Gospel, do they not conspire to the same end, by working on our passions, our hopes and fears, and thereby engaging us to consider more seriously and attentively than we should otherwise do, the reasonableness of Religion, the obligation we are under from all the principles of gratitude and ingenuity to serve God, whose service is the most perfect freedom; the intrinsic value, and native beauty of holiness, and great excellence of all those divine and spiritual attainments which Christianity obliges us to aspire after? &c. So that the efficacy of Gospel-promises and threatenings in kindling the love of God in the soul, and of those actions and dispositions in which the image of God consists, (which by the way is true vital Religion) is not exerted *so much* in a *direct* and *immediate* manner, as indirectly and more remotely, by being the occasion of our considering and discerning the *loveliness* of these things. Take, for an example, those two places of Scripture, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* As far as such passages influence men in a *moral way*, not only determining their *resolutions* to deny themselves sinful gratifications, and to lead a sober, righteous, and godly life, but actually possessing them with a *relish* and

appro-

approbation of that which is good; how do they produce this effect if not *chiefly* as *motives* by which men are persuaded to consider the nature and necessity of this qualification, and the happiness resulting from the free intercourse of a holy soul with a holy God; the *consideration* of which being joined with their own *experience* in the course of a good life, works in them a deep *conviction* of the reasonableness of Religion, as this conviction tends to bring them heartily in love with it? Without this, how can the Christian properly *delight in God*, or have any tolerable notion of the blessedness of enjoying him? The same thing is much more evident of some other threatenings; for what *direct* efficacy hath the threatening of eternal wrath and destruction to inspire men with the love of God, and of goodness, and with the hatred of sin as sin?

Q U E R Y XV.

In whatever state we consider men, whether in that before *conversion* or after, is it of no use to set before them the *reasonableness* of those duties that are required of them, and the *goodness* of God in requiring them? May not those who are engaged in a vicious course of life, especially persons of some tempers, be *first* awakened by such *rational* considerations, which apply to their understandings and ingenuity, dating the *occasion* and *beginnings* of
 their

their conversion to God from thence; or at least of such a degree of reformation and amendment as brings them nearer the *kingdom of heaven* than they were before, and renders them much more useful members of society? And may not the *progress* of others who are entered upon a holy life, and the pleasure they have in the practice of piety, the adherence of their hearts to God, the elevation of their affections, and liveliness of their devotions, be greatly prompted by the same means? They who deny this, are desired to shew why, when the Spirit of God does not, we may say *cannot*, work Grace where there is not the *faculty* of Reason, the free *exercise* of that faculty should *hinder* rather than *invite* his operations, and conspire to render them more successful?

Q U E R Y XVI.

Did not *Christ* teach as a *Lawgiver*; and his Apostles as persons inspired? But for the *ordinary Ministers* of the Gospel, what are they else than *Expounders* of the Christian Revelation; above mere *Readers*, and below *men inspired*? Now the question is, whether the lawgiver and the inspired person do not act agreeably to their character, though they should require obedience, without assigning any other reason for it besides the authority which the command is built on, or the promises and threatenings by which it is enforced?

Was

Was it not after this manner the *Decalogue* was delivered from mount *Sinai*, and the other laws were recorded by *Moses*? Notwithstanding which, is it not allowable for them whose business it is to expound the Scripture, yea, and their duty too, according to the best of their capacity, to unfold the meaning of the *sacred Text*; and by Reason and Argument to vindicate every part of it from the objections raised against it by *pride*, *ignorance*, and sinful *prejudices*? Could they who sat in *Moses's Seat* have given the *Rationale* of the Law, assigning the ground and occasion of every particular precept, ought they not to have done it, in order to demonstrate, with the greatest evidence, that *no one nation had statutes and judgments so righteous as all that Law which Moses in the name of God set before the people of Israel*? As this, with regard to the Laws and Institutions of Christ may be more easily done, is it any mark of respect to Christ, as *Lawgiver of the Christian Church*, to neglect it?

Q U E R Y XVII.

If because our Saviour and his Apostles, in the short accounts we have of the Doctrine taught by them, proposed things without *much* or *frequent reasoning* upon them, the Preachers of the Gospel must not venture to *reason* with their hearers, though in the most *familiar way*, and in things that are the proper sub-

subjects of *reasoning*, or must do it very sparingly; may we not argue in like manner, that forasmuch as we seldom meet with any but general commands and prohibitions in the *sacred Scriptures*, we ought therefore to confine ourselves to *generals*, and not presume to bring down general rules to *particular cases* and *circumstances*? Why is not their example a rule, from which we are never to depart, in one case as well as in the other, so that, *for instance*, we ought not to *explain* the meaning and extent of that command, *Lye not one to another*, (shewing that *equivocations*, *mental reservations*, and deceiving by *actions*, as well as by *words*, are included under it; which, by the way, too cannot be done without proper *arguments*) any more than to *prove* the *reasonableness* of it, by setting forth the evil of the thing forbidden? If he that *reasons* pretends therein to be wiser than Christ and his Apostles, and to have a better way of preaching than they had, does not he do the very same who *explains*?

Q U E R Y XVIII.

What a bulk must the Writings of the *New Testament* have grown to, did they not only present us with a *short view* of the Doctrines, Precepts, and Promises of the Christian Religion, but contained also particular and copious *enlargements* upon each. On the other hand,

hand, without such enlargements, and building on the foundation laid in Scripture, within how short a compass will a Minister's work, as a *Preacher*, be reduced? How little will he have to say upon particular subjects, and how hard be put to it to avoid endless, and tiresome repetitions, supposing him to continue several years with the same People?

Q U E R Y XIX.

Who express the truest regard to the *Scripture* in the manner of their preaching, *they* who make it their aim to keep close to the meaning and intent of the *Holy Ghost* in every part of it, especially when any *Point of Doctrine* is to be established; or *others*, who satisfy themselves with the sound of words, taking the sense upon trust, and sometimes have not even that poor foundation for their discoveries, but chuse a Text for no other, or better reason, but that being of the allegorical and figurative kind, it will afford their fancies full scope to ramble, and give them an opportunity to prove strange things, which cannot be proved any other way? *e. g.* That men are passive in the work of conversion, able to contribute little or nothing more to it than if they were so many stocks and stones, is a notion highly injurious to the honour of our Maker, contradictory to the plainest assertions of Scripture, and destructive
of

of every exhortation and motive to a holy life. But now only take for your Text those words of God to the Prophet—*Can these bones live? Prophecy over these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord*—and you carry your point at once. Rare way of evincing the *truth*, which is equally fitted to demonstrate the greatest *absurdities!* Witness those lovers of the *marvellous*, and devourers of nonsense and contradiction, the *Papists*; who in that figurative expression, *This is my Body*, have found the doctrine of *Transubstantiation* as plainly taught, as some good *Protestants* have several articles of their faith in other metaphorical and mystical places of the *Bible*.

Q U E R Y XX.

Is not the judicious, understanding Christian, whose piety is substantial, his charity extensive, and his zeal according to knowledge, a more amiable character, of greater credit to Religion, and more weight and authority in the world, than another who is stiff and positive, he hardly knows *why*, or for *what*, and very often in the wrong place; apt to confine Religion to his own party, and childishly troublesome to all about him? Does not *one* as a *Minister*, a *Master*, a *Parent*, or in any other station and relation of life, take the way to *allure* to a love and esteem for Religion
those

those who are within the sphere of his influence; the *other* to frighten them from it? And under what sort of *Preaching* is each of these characters most likely to spring up, and prevail? Were it not much to be wished, that some men, in their great zeal for Religion, would argue and reason for it more than they do; and not run the hazard of exposing it to the ridicule of enemies, giving disgust to the wiser part of its friends, and making conceited *enthusiasts*, and peevish ignorant *bigots* of too many of the rest?

Q U E R Y XXI.

Ought not some consideration to be had of the prevailing genius and taste of the *Age* for rational knowledge, and freer inquiries? So that, allowing there have been times when a dogmatical way of asserting things without proving them, and raising the passions of people in a *mechanical*, rather than a *rational* way, answered the great ends of Preaching better than any other method would have done (which I am far from believing) yet now that the state of things is very much altered, and great numbers are no longer to be treated as *children*, nor will be contented to have their understandings *amazed* and *dazzled*, instead of being *enlightened*, Ministers ought in *prudence* to change their way, as far as they can do it with a *good conscience*. Would that

method which once did good, now do mischief; and another method, without doing the same hurt, do more good; and ought not *that* to be laid aside then, and *this* chosen? May not the *rational*, and the *serious* and *pathetick sobriety* and *freedom* of thought, be reconciled and united in our Pulpit-Discourses; and would they not do more execution if they were? Why should we scruple differing from a former Age in the method of Preaching any more than in the expression; if, as the change in the language makes the one expedient, so different circumstances do the other? Or, What reason have we to think, that the *wiser part* of our Forefathers would not have had some regard to men and things; not by giving up their Religion, but in order to procure it the greater success? As it is certain, *these* never went at all, or not so far, into the puerile and fanciful way of Preaching when it was most in fashion.

Q U E R Y XXII.

Are not some men averse to reasoning on *religious subjects*, from an apprehension of the ill consequence it will be of to their *favourite opinions*? *First*, You must not use your Reason upon the *Doctrines* of *Christianity*; because those which they teach for such, will not bear that examination; being as opposite to all the principles of *Reason* and *Scripture*

too,

too, as darkness is to light; of which kind are *absolute Decrees*; God's giving men a *Being*, but never putting them into a proper capacity of obtaining happiness, or avoiding misery; which is to make their *Being* no favour, but the quite contrary; and consequently, to take away all obligation to God, and all foundation of guilt: that the Gospel is afforded to the greater part of those that enjoy it, only to render them the more inexcusable, &c.—
 Next, You must not reason upon the *Precepts* of the Gospel, though they approve themselves to the Reason of all mankind; because should you be allowed to reason upon *any part* of Religion, the most apparently reasonable, you might be apt to go further than you should; attempt to prove that censoriousness cannot be christian zeal; bitter envyings and strifes, with a narrow, selfish, or at best, party spirit, is not that charity which the Gospel so earnestly recommends; nor a worldly, scraping temper, any mark of a man's setting his affections upon things above: and from hence might proceed to ask a reason of some other things, for which no good reason can be given, though placed by too many among the most precious truths of the Gospel. Is it not plain, (according to an old saying). that *such men are against Reason*, because conscious to themselves that *Reason is against them*; if not upon the same ac-

count, also, as the *Pharisees* opposed our Blessed Lord, because of the tendency and design of his doctrine to take off the people from a slavish dependence upon their dictates? This is known to be the ground of that great care which the *Romish Church* takes, to keep all of her Communion from examining those large and nauseous doses which she obliges them to swallow. And as far as the same spirit and practice prevail among *Protestants*, they forget, and put off their own character, and act in the borrowed one of *Papists*. Whether they do this because they have occasion for disguise and concealment, like the *Papists*, they that are *guilty* should consider; and all others will easily judge. — The next *Query* shall be founded on the Quotation in the Title-Page.

Q U E R Y XXIII.

If repeating after others be the work of *memory* only, in which *children* very often, if not *generally*, excel grown persons, are those grown persons to be esteemed men in understanding, of whom the best that can be said, is, that they have not forgot the *Catechism* which they learned when they were children? Possibly, they may be able to bring, what they have been taught to call, *Proofs* of every Point of their Faith or Practice; but as long as they acquiesce in those *Proofs*, good
or

or bad, as they were delivered to them, as it were *sealed up*, without all inquiry, reflection, or exercise of the least act of their judgment about them, are they Proofs to *them*? Let them deserve commendation as much as you please in other respects, is it not a melancholy truth, that, after all, they are but *children in understanding*? To couclude.

Q U E R Y XXIV.

If because *Reason*, or rather a pretence to it, is liable to be abused, *Reason* therefore must be banished from Religion, will not this justify the *Papists* in laying aside the *Scriptures* too, which may be, and frequently have been, perverted to the worst purposes? Especially, when forbidding men to reason, but allowing them to read the *Scriptures* is only doing things by halves, and too much like leaving a man in possession of a sword * after you have put out his eyes, which should direct him in the use of it.

* *The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*
Eph. vi. 17.



1840

W. T. L. R.



A

LETTER

To the REVEREND

Mr. JOHN BALL,

Of HONITON, *Devonshire,*

On his late

PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED,

*Some Remarks on a new Way of
Preaching, &c.*

1737.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LETTER

TO JOHN DILLON

BY J. M. F. F.

CHICAGO: THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS, 1900.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



T H E

P R E F A C E.

I Must beg the Reader's patience while I make two or three general observations concerning the Remarks, not mentioned in the following Letter to the Author. The first is on the Remarker's management with regard to the chief subject, and, I believe I may say, sole occasion, of his great work, viz. the * Ordination Sermon, and Defence of it, in a small Pamphlet, entitled, Queries proposed to the consideration of all such as think it an injury to Religion to shew the Reasonableness of it. The Remarks consist but of four and twenty pages. Of these the Author spends more than twelve before he comes to the consideration of the Sermon and Queries, which he quits again, p. 21; in the few pages between making a Diversion to Dr. Wishart, whom, so impartial is he, he treats with as little ceremony as he does me. And how does he imploy that small pittance of

* For the Rev. Mr. Amory and Rev. Mr. Cornish
Vol. I. p. 467.

of his Book which properly relates to the passages excepted against in the said Sermon and Queries? Is it in briefly and fairly stating the matter in debate? Answering, or giving hints of answers, to the arguments urged in the Queries? Or advancing so much as one single argument, deserving that name, against the doctrine in the Sermon? Nothing less. He mistakes, he accuses, he rails, he exclaims and laments; and that's all. This, indeed, must be said for him, that he is a bright example of the dogmatical and mechanical way of writing, and of that aversion to Reason in Religion, with which it seems to be one principal part of his aim to possess his Readers.

Another observation is, that what bath most truth, and the greatest shew of argument, in the Remarks, is nothing to the purpose; not, in the least, affecting the Author of the Proofs of a Future State. The Remarker makes a short flourish on the moral proofs of the immortality of the soul, and a life after this. And are not the moral arguments most largely insisted on by the Author of the Proofs himself? It is true, he lays the foundation in the natural immortality, or spirituality, of the soul, as a fair presumption of its being designed to continue for ever in Being, no counter probability appearing on the opposite side; but not as a full proof of it, without taking in the consideration of the superior excellence of the human soul; Proofs, Chap. III. §. 7, 8. which shews the
learned

learned comparison of the setting dog to be quite impertinent to the present case. The Remarker, likewise, harangues upon sincerity; which, he truly observes, will not excuse men, when it signifies no more than their acting according to their present thoughts. And, where hath the Author of the Proofs supposed that it would? Where hath he given any such maimed and partial idea of sincerity? Hath he not, on the contrary, expressed himself with all the guard he could have been expected to have done, if he had foreseen such an attack; pleading for none among the Heathen but such as were honest minded, and had integrity of heart, did not hold the truth in unrighteousness, but were lovers of the things which are good and true, and sincerely desirous of knowing and doing their duty? p. 183, 184. But though this talk of sincerity, and the moral Proofs of a Future State, is nothing to the purpose, of confuting any thing said by the Author of the Proofs, it may, for ought I know, be to the Remarker's purpose, which is, too evidently, to give the world as bad a notion as he can of Mr. G——. But, in the mean while, I much doubt, were the Remarker to be tried by his own notion of sincerity, as including an endeavour to know the truth, he would not very soon be able to find a Jury of twelve good men and true, to acquit him in this particular point; for, as to his general character, I am far from calling that in question.

*The last observation relates to the time of publishing the Remarks, six Years after the appearance of the Books * against which they are levelled. This leaves the mistakes that occur in them, arising from passion and prejudice, without excuse. If they had been drawn up and printed in haste, it might have been pleaded, that the Author had been carried too far by the warmth of his temper, and a zeal for the truth, which he imagined to be injured by Mr. G——'s notions. But here was time enough for a greater fire than so small a matter should have kindled, to go out, and for the Remarker coolly and impartially to examine the criminal passages, which would have convinced him, that they were really very innocent, and so have prevented this shame to himself, and imposition on the zeal of his credulous Reader. But here lies the advantage of this late publication. The circumstances in favour of the Sermon, as its being approved by the Audience, and published at the unanimous desire of a great number of Ministers then present, it is to be hoped, are now forgotten; the Sermon itself not easily to be had, and the minds of a great many people, by the prejudices industriously, instilled and propagated against certain persons, for a considerable time past, better fitted to receive any suggestions of the Remarker, without suspicion of their being groundless, and to take the impression and ply he is willing to give them. This seems*

to

* The Queries excepted

to be the truth of the case, as far as appearances will help us to guess at it. But how fair this sort of dealing is, I leave every candid and inquiring Reader to judge.

N. B. To make the Reader some satisfaction for this personal Debate, of which let the aggressor bear the blame; if Mr. Ball, or any friend of his, be disposed to enter into a sober inquiry, Whether, and how far, the Use of Reason is to be allowed in Religion, the Author of the following Letter promises, God willing, to give what is offered a fair examination, and either frankly own himself a convert to his Reasons, or shew cause why he is not.





A
L E T T E R
T O T H E

Rev. Mr. *B A L L*, &c.

Taunton, Jan. 4, 1736-7.

Reverend SIR,

I H A V E read over your late extraordinary performance, and have the satisfaction to be able to say, that I heartily forgive the Writer, and wish him no other harm than a better spirit. Your Book is certainly an *original* in its kind; and as such, it represents me an unusual appearance, or new light, which the world had not seen for many hundred years; one that exalt myself above Christ and his Apostles, and teach most dangerous opinions. In the very Title you bring
me

me upon the stage, like an ecclesiastical criminal, dressed in a sort of *Sambenito*, and both there, and in your Book do, as it were, cry out as loud as you can—"Fellow-Christians, mark this man, and avoid him; let no one admonish him as a Brother, for so I never did, but count him an enemy, a grievous wolf entered in among you, not sparing the flock, and therefore not to be spared, nor treated according to the laws of honourable war."

Now, though, after the most serious and impartial reflection, I am not sensible of my having given the least just occasion for the least part of all this outrage, and owe you no thanks for attempting to ruin my reputation and usefulness in the Church of Christ, yet I shall have great reason to bless God, if the unkind usage I have met with prove the motive to my sifting every part of my temper and conduct more narrowly than I had ever done before, humbling myself before God for my most secret errors, and improving in those excellent, but too much neglected virtues, of meekness, gentleness, humility, forgiveness of injuries, brotherly kindness and charity. As an instance of this last, I shall endeavour, Sir; to convince you, that, under the specious notion of zeal for your Master, you have, without any authority for it from him, been unmercifully beating your fellow-servant, and doing him the greatest wrong.

Small

Small matters (though such only *comparatively*) I pass over, nor think it worth my while to complain, that there is not one good-natured passage, nor a single sentence that shews the least relentings of humanity, much less that breathes a christian spirit, throughout your Book; contented to point out the grosser misrepresentations, which, in case they were as wilful as they are groundless, it would be difficult to reconcile with the character of an honest man; and, with all the softness of which they are capable, discover such an amazing degree of prejudice, as, perhaps, is scarcely to be paralleled in an Author of any learning, sense and piety.

The Articles of my accusation are as follow—Because I freely declared, as many other greater and better men than myself have done, against that inhuman, let me add, and unchristian opinion, which damns all the *Heathen* world without exception, and without mercy, (*Proofs of a Future State from Reason*) therefore I am a friend to the *free-thinkers*, or *deists* of the age, and intended what I wrote for their service and encouragement, that they might think themselves in no danger, provided they were sincere, (*Remarks*, p. 7, and 8.) though the two cases, of men bred up in the darkness of heathenism, and our modern unbelievers, who live where Christianity is the Established Religion, and are apostates from it, are as

widely different as can well be; and I had expressly observed in favour of the charitable notion, (*Proofs of a Future State*, p. 139.) *That it greatly facilitates the answer to an objection against the Gospel, from its imperfect promulgation, not more common than plausible, and, according to the scheme which some men have framed of Christianity, utterly unanswerable.*

This reason (and it were easy to add others) is so obvious, of the peculiar acceptableness of this notion, of the salvability of the *Heathen*, to those who are concerned for the honour of their Religion, and would effectually vindicate it against the reproaches of its enemies, that it is surprizing you could think of no other reason for this than that *ill-natured* one you mention. If I have mistaken your meaning it is unwillingly, and must be imputed to the obscurity of the passage, of which I can hardly make sense without supposing an error or two of the Press. Your words are, *I can think of no other reason for mens pleading the case (cause) of the Heathen, than because, as our Author tells us, we are in an age of free-thinkers, even against the plainest Scriptures. They may think themselves in no danger if they are sincere.* The sentence, I apprehend, is wrong pointed, and, with the addition of a single word, should run thus. *I can think of no other reason for mens pleading the cause of the Heathen, than because*
we

we are in an age of free-thinkers, that, even against the plainest Scriptures, they may think themselves in no danger if they are sincere. For to whom does the word *they* refer but to free-thinkers? And who are the free-thinkers but, those commonly meant by that name, the *deists*? Though, what passage you have in your eye, when you say, *The Author tells us we are in an age of free-thinkers*, I cannot guess, unless it be *Query* twenty-one, where the question is put—Whether some consideration ought not to be had of the prevailing genius and taste of the *Age* for *rational knowledge*, and *freer inquiries*? But as these expressions of *rational knowledge* and *freer inquiries*, are very innocent in themselves, so I never knew them used or understood in that invidious sense which you seem to affix to them, as I dare say the Author of the *Queries* did not so intend them. You might therefore, at least, have allowed me to have *designed well*; and if you thought my arguments did not come up to the point, you would have done much better to shew where the inconclusiveness of them lay, than, letting alone his *arguments*, to attack the *secret intention* of the Writer, of which you had no commission to erect yourself into a judge. What my thoughts are of the case of the *deists* you might have seen in my *Discourse of Saving Faith*, p. 90, 91, 92. to which I refer you for satisfaction.

Because I had said, *I did not see why we might not have charity for those that were sunk deeper into idolatry* (than the persons that had been just before mentioned) *provided they were honest minded, and did not so much want integrity of heart as a clearer knowledge of divine things.* (*Proofs of a Futare State*, p. 183.) You first change the word *deeper* into *deepest*, and instead of the words *honest minded, and not so much wanting integrity of heart, &c.* substitute *not scandalously vicious*, and then ask, What shall we say to this man's profession of friendship to Revelation? (*Remarks*, p. 8.) While others, when they meet with this, and several instances more of immorality in writing, will be apt to think there is much more reason for putting the question, *Where is the Remarker's regard to the rules of common equity and truth?*

Because I did not apprehend what St. Paul saith in the first Chapter of his *Epistle to the Romans*, to include every individual person amongst the *Heathens* in all ages and nations of the world, but only to express their general character, you are pleased to put me in mind of another translation of the *Bible*, which it seems the Rational Divines (among whom I have the honour to be ranked) hope for; in the marginal notes to which they are desired to acquaint the world, when the Apostle is to be believed, and when not; after which you cry out, *Is this the use of Reason in Religion,*

Religion, to exalt it against the Scriptures? Further, very kindly insinuating a parallel between me and *Socinus*, who, you say, would not believe a thing because he found it in *Scripture*; to which you add, *You see then there are some that come up pretty near to his way of using the holy Scripture.* (*Remarks*, p. 8, 9.) And all this notwithstanding I had expressly entered a caveat against any such perverse construction of what I said. (*Proofs of a Future State*, p. 164.) My words are, “ *This Author* (Mr. *Hallett*) *having painted that a vast deal blacker which was but too black before, I hope I shall not give any just occasion of offence if I turn advocate for the accused, not in opposition to the Apostle Paul, (N. B.) every tittle of whose charge against them I am ready to subscribe to, but to Mr. Hallett, who setting up for the Apostle’s interpreter, hath mistook his meaning, and aggravated things beyond all truth and charity.*” I dare believe you are not angry with me merely for differing from Mr. *Hallett*, but because Mr. *Hallett* in the present case hath the happiness to agree with Mr. *Ball* and his friends, whose comments are no more to be disputed than the text itself. But you ought to have forgiven me, because, till now, you had never let the world know your opinion in this matter, nor offered yourself to me for an infallible guide; though, if you had, I very much doubt, I should have

taken the Protestant Liberty to judge for myself, not having heard that the Apostle *Paul* had deputed any one, whether at *Rome* or *Honiton*, or elsewhere, to declare his mind for him.

Because I had recommended to Ministers (*Sermon*, p. 18, 19.) “*The taking all opportunities of shewing their hearers the excellency of the doctrines and precepts of our holy Religion—The reasonableness of the duties required of us, and the goodness of God in requiring them, and this the rather, because our Saviour himself, as a Lawgiver, did not see fit to enter into the particular reasons of his commands (i. e. to enlarge upon them) and to prove the divine original of his doctrine from a distinct consideration of its nature and tendency, though he himself hints at this,*” (as when he exposes the absurdity of the suggestion, that he cast out devils by *Beelzebub* the prince of the devils from hence, that then *Satan* would be divided against himself, and so his kingdom could not stand; which, I take it, is arguing from the nature of his doctrine in conjunction with his miracles.) For this and no other reason, unless one that shall be considered presently, I am accused of taking a new way of preaching, of which we have no example in *Christ’s* preaching; that I think my own a better way, and to shew the excellence of it above that of *Christ*, offer at several things; that I cast the greatest reproach upon

upon Christ, and think myself wiser, and more compassionate to the souls of men than he was. And the truth is, if this were really the case, you might well say, *Whither will pride carry men?* You say, *philosophical* pride; to which question give me leave to reply first, that *unphilosophical* pride is no more a virtue of the Gospel than *philosophical*; and that the truly humble man is the furthest of any from so much as rashly *suspecting* others of pride, and much more from causelessly *charging* them with it in the face of the world, and with being puffed up with a *fleshy mind*; the best language you can bestow upon Dr. *Wishart* and me. Besides I do not know where in the Sermon I have said any thing of *philosophy*, much less made empty boasts, and a vain ostentation of *my own*.

To the substance of the article I answer, that I verily believe the precepts of the Gospel to be in themselves excellent and reasonable (*i. e.* founded in the nature of God and of man, the nature of the relations subsisting betwixt them, as of Creator and creature, parent and off-spring, sovereign and subject, benefactor and beneficiary, redeemer and redeemed; and finally, the nature of the circumstances men are placed in) that this internal excellence of the precepts of Christianity is one chief glory of our Religion, and included in the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, mentioned by the Apostle

Paul; that God did not only design to shew his *authority*, but also his *wisdom* and *goodness* in the Gospel constitution; all this I firmly believe, and fancy you yourself will hardly deny. I further observe, that our blessed Lord frequently subjoins to his commands one or more *reasons* of them (though he does not distinctly and largely enter into them, and argue from them to the truth of his Religion) for which I appeal to his admirable Sermon on the Mount (see particularly Chap. v. ver. 37, 45, and 48. Chap. vi. ver. 8, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25—34. Chap. vii. ver. 1—4. 7—11, 12, 13. in all which places he shews himself to be no enemy to the *reason of things*.) And, Oh, how much is it to be wished, that the amiable virtues in-joined by our blessed Saviour, and to which he annexes a beatitude, were better practised by his followers! Those not excepted, who are such engrossers of the knowledge and love of Christ, that they will hardly allow their neighbours to have any share of them.

And now, if you please, let us *reason* a little upon the premises. It is a terrible word, I own, but you will forgive it. Can there be any harm in shewing the commands of the Gospel to be what they really are? To point out the wisdom and goodness of God in them? Or were these perfections displayed, that we should take no notice of them? To *amplify* upon those reasons which Christ hath
mentioned

mentioned of his commands, and to produce others that are of weight and importance, and have a tendency to strengthen the conviction of their duty in the minds of our hearers? Is doing this a mark of disrespect to our Saviour? Casting the greatest reproach upon him, and making ourselves wiser than he? What, to shew that he is the Author of a Religion every way worthy to come from God; a Religion most apparently calculated to promote the glory of God, and the happiness of man, private and social, present and future? This, I own, is making ourselves wiser than the *Author of our Faith* in the same sense, and no other, as we make ourselves wiser than the *Creator of the world*, when, by the right use of that Reason which he hath given us, we shew his infinite wisdom in framing it.

But shall Ministers presume to do what Christ and his Apostles did not? And, good Sir, do not they do this when they make entire discourses, of a great length, nay and several, upon single subjects, as upon a particular doctrine or duty of Christianity, methodize them according to the rules of art, collect under distinct heads those things which lie dispersed in the word of God, and digest into a regular body the scattered parts and branches of Christian doctrines, as in Catechisms and other Summaries of Religion? By all which, according to this *new way of thinking*,
they

they reproach the Scriptures as wanting perspicuity, fulness, method and order, or something else; nor is there any way of amending this but by a Minister's contenting himself barely to read the Scriptures; though this would hardly content the people, who would be ready to think they could do this as well themselves, without being beholden to a Minister for it.

Only consider the character and office of our blessed Saviour, and the circumstances of his Ministry. Our divine Master planted a new Religion, wrought miracles, taught with authority, spent less than four years in his whole Ministry; during which time he did not confine his teaching to one single place, but went up and down doing good, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. And I hope, all these things laid together, he needed not that I should make any excuse for him (to use a modest and pious phrase of your own) which you reckon I ought to have done, when I could make excuses for the *Heathen*. The wisdom is obvious to every one of the method he took. But what is all this to the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel, who are no workers of miracles, do not teach with authority in the same sense Christ did, are not infallible teachers of a new Religion, but fallible expounders of one already fully taught, and labour years together

ther among the same People, who are bred up in the knowledge of the Christian Religion, have the Bible in their hands, and perhaps, as to the words of it, are many of them, as well acquainted with it as their guide himself is? As to the Apostles, we have little more than the substance of their doctrine, either in the *Acts* or in their *Epistles*, as it could not indeed have been otherwise without swelling the Records of our Religion to an inconvenient bulk; besides that some of the same observations made concerning our Saviour will hold of them too.

Because in opposition to the way of representing the *work of conversion* by some men, as of such a nature that Reason and consideration have little or no influence upon it, and the means made use of are not so properly the *means* as an arbitrary condition of the change produced, an immediate and irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit doing all, and Faith as a moral cause or motive nothing; because in opposition to this false account of the matter (as I cannot but think it) I make the change of the heart in conversion, under the influences of divine Grace, to be the effect of *rational conviction*, and that of *serious consideration*, and suppose that it is by means of this latter, and not so directly, or immediately, that the promises and threatenings of the Gospel produce their intended

intended effect, you charge me *, for daring to talk after this manner, with despising Christ's way of converting souls as indirect and round about, and as taking upon me to shew a more direct and ready way to heaven, and as relying, not upon the Holy Spirit, but upon the dint of Reason, in order to convey Religion into the heart (for I suppose you include me with Dr. *Wishart*) *Remarks*, p. 14, 16, 20. and then at last, in the ebullition of your zeal against the Doctor and me, and with an enthusiasm which no man in his sober senses will reckon *divine*, break out in these

* In the passages referred to above, after having asserted a proper subserviency in the Gospel to promote the work of conversion, I add, *Sermon*, page 26. " And if it be
 " granted that there is a real sanctifying virtue in the
 " Gospel, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, this
 " virtue must proceed from a fitness in the doctrines and
 " precepts of the Gospel to beget in us the love of God,
 " and of those qualities and actions that will render us
 " like God; which love must be the effect of a con-
 " viction, that the things which the Gospel ascribes to
 " God as adorable perfections, and requires of man in
 " order to his resembling God, are in their own nature
 " lovely and excellent. Even the *promises* and *threat-*
 " *enings* of the Gospel, do not, perhaps so *directly* (and
 " *immediately*) influence the conversion of the heart to
 " God, and our endeavours after holiness, but rather
 " *indirectly* (or *mediately*) as they work upon our passions
 " (of hope and fear) and thereby ingage us to consider
 " more seriously or *attentively*, than we should other-
 " do, the reasonableness of Religion, the intrinsic value
 " and native beauty of holiness, and great excellence of
 " all those divine and spiritual attainments which
 " Christianity obliges us to aspire after."

these extraordinary words, “ Woe to our
 “ Saviour when he falls into the hands of
 “ Philosophers and Rational Divines! His
 “ enemies in his life-time called him a
 “ *madman*; and what do these men call him
 “ when they tell us he used a method in
 “ preaching fit only *to please children and*
 “ *fright fools?*” Really, Sir, I can hardly
 forbear catching a little of the contagion, and
 crying out with an indignation, I hope better
 grounded and more decent and charitable,
 “ Woe to the most reasonable Religion in the
 “ whole world, when it falls into the hands
 “ of men that are the avowed enemies of
 “ Reason; the *Goths* and *Vandals* of the
 “ Christian Church! Woe to the Rational
 “ Divines should they fall under the power
 “ of blind and merciless bigots!”

But to return from our transports; let me
 appeal to yourself as judge, when the hot fit
 is over, if your distemper be intermitting—
 Whether the whole glory of our conversion
 is not ascribed to Christ in the passages just
 now quoted out of the Sermon? To the *Gos-*
pel he taught, and the *Spirit* he communi-
 cates? Is not Christ stiled the *glorious subject*
 of the Gospel-Revelation, as well as the *di-*
vine Author of it, of whose person and of-
 fices, his life and death, &c. and astonishing
 affection to the children of men, every faith-
 ful Minister of Christ is supposed to discourse
 with pleasure, and to take every opportunity
 of

of returning to them, and *pressing the duties of the christian life from these motives?* And is it not further allowed that he is the best preacher of Christ, whose way of preaching is best fitted to convince men of their need of Christ, and to bring them to trust in him for grace and glory, according to the tenor of his promises, and to esteem and love him, in the way which he himself describes? (*Serm.* p. 26, 27.) It is true, *consideration* is made necessary on our part (in the *Scripture*, if I mistake not, as well as the *Sermon*, and, if it was not, instead of teaching a more *direct* I should have taught a more *round about* way to heaven than Christ did, contrary to what I am accused of doing) and, more than this, I suppose it to be the Minister's part to assist his hearers in the practice of this duty, setting before them the subjects of consideration in a proper and affecting light; among others, the grounds of that divine affection of *love* which is every where in the New Testament represented as the perfection of Religion, and in which the *conversion of the heart to God* does principally consist, as laid in the *real loveliness of the object*; the nature of the christian blessedness; the necessity of holiness, not barely as the condition of obtaining this blessedness, but an essential qualification for the enjoyment of it: to produce the love of God as the most amiable

Being,

Being, the love of holiness as holiness, and the hatred of sin as sin (of which I am speaking in that place, and) which a bare abstinence from the outward act of sin, the bare promise or threatening, without any sense and consideration of the nature of the objects, is not of itself sufficient to do; they may, indeed, immediately produce *hope* and *fear*, or great emotions and raptures of joy, upon a persuasion of our being interested in the promises, and exempted from the threatenings, especially when this is apprehended to be by an *absolute grace, which leaves out others*. And it is sad to consider, that conversion is too often placed in these affections to the ruin of many souls. But the love before described, the love of the *righteous Lord*, and of *righteousness*, is, ordinarily at least, the fruit of knowledge and consideration, under the conspiring influences of the Divine Spirit. If herein I am mistaken you would have done well to have set me right; which you have not attempted by a single argument, or what hath the face of one, and you cannot imagine I have my notions so much at command, that I can part with them as with my money, whenever a stern inquisitor bids me deliver them; or that if it was in my power I ought to do it, to avoid suffering for them. But enough of this. To proceed now to another article.

Because the Author of the *Queries* (*Query* 21.) had allowed that there might have been times when a dogmatical way of asserting things without proving them from *Reason*, or *Scripture*, (for *impertinent Quotations* from *Scripture* are no proofs) and raising the passions of people in a mechanical way was practised by some men, without naming *them* or their *Party*, (by *mechanical*, meaning whatever strikes the imagination, and works up the affections without imparting any light to the understanding, or receiving any assistance from it) you will needs have it I tell the world that Christ took a dogmatical way in his teaching (notwithstanding his proving the truth of his *Mission*, and consequently of his *Doctrine*, by miracles and other ways.) Nay, you roundly assert the dogmatical way of preaching is the *phrase* I give to Christ's, and that I am sensible the mechanical way of raising mens passions was the very way that Christ took. (*Rem.* p. 13, and 18.) This sounds as if you really thought that Christ was a dogmatical and mechanical Preacher; but be your thoughts what they will, I assure you, Sir, I should reckon it a very high dishonour to our blessed Lord to say any such thing of him. Nor hath the Author of the *Queries* said any thing like it, unless his supposing it of certain Preachers must be construed to this sense.

I have

I have heard indeed of some men who fancied such a proper *commutation of persons* betwixt Christ and them, that their sins are Christ's sins, and Christ's righteousness is their righteousness; not barely as to the *effects*, but the *things themselves*, mutually transferred by *imputation*; in which this doctrine is almost the reverse of *that of Transubstantiation*, and quite as unintelligible; the same *individual qualities*, in one case, wandering from subject to subject, while, in the other, the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the body and blood of Christ, the accidents or qualities still remaining. But I cannot find the maintainers of this *communicatio idiomatum* have ever carried their notion so far as to say, that whoever takes notice of any little peculiarity, error, or imperfection in these unhappy favourites, does, *ipso facto*, impute the same to Jesus Christ, and Christ takes them on himself, if truly theirs. I beg, Sir, for the future, you will not make me say what I never said, and abhor saying. Let the Reader have my own words, without mutilation, or addition, or any of your stretching paraphrases and consequences. *Charity* I expect none, no, not *pagan* charity, much less *christian*, I know some men too well for that; but for *credit*, if not for *conscience*, sake, let us have a little *justice*; do not, either to gratify your own spleen, or that of another man, be guilty

of doing what in a court of human judicature would be deemed an iniquity to be punished by the Judge.

To the instances of *false-witnessing* already mentioned give me leave to add a most notorious one from *p. 17.* of your *Remarks*. You can I see leave out or put in words at pleasure, as best serves the design you have, to blacken and defame. In your quotation, *p. 16.* you, not quite so fairly as cunningly, drop those words which would have shewn the passage to be nothing at all to your purpose; but here of your great bounty you insert the following ones of your own, printing them in the same character with mine, that the Reader might imagine the whole to have been transcribed from me, *We shall love and thank God more* (sc. as the effect of this new way of preaching) *than we should do by Christ's way of preaching.* After which my own words begin, *For such a man contemplates God, &c.* You need not be told that I had not been saying a word in that place (*Pref. to the Proofs of a Future State* *) of

* It may not be disagreeable to the Reader to have the whole passage set before him; "Whoever demonstrates
 " the intrinsick beauty of holiness, and the foundation
 " which the commands of the Gospel have in the rea-
 " son of mens minds, and the nature of things; who-
 " ever goes further, and shews the doctrines of Christi-
 " anity to be either the result of the best and purest Rea-
 " son, an improvement upon it, or not contrary to it,
 " does good service to the cause of the Gospel, and, if
 " he

of Christ's way of preaching, and that it is quite foreign to my subject. But no matter for that, having begun to fling dirt you was resolved I should have enough of it. Let me further ask you a few civil questions—Where do I acknowledge that my way of

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preach-

“ he does it from an inward veneration to Christ and
 “ his Religion, is to be esteemed a better friend to
 “ both than another, who, in all matters of faith or
 “ practice, looks only to the evidence and authority of
 “ Revelation; which is putting the *Christian Religion*
 “ upon much the same level with the *Jewish*. Among
 “ the doctrines of the Gospel, which we should expect
 “ to be not only consistent with Reason, but taught by
 “ it, that of future recompences is one; and when the
 “ Christian finds that this is actually the case, that Rea-
 “ son proclaims a Judgment to come as well as Revela-
 “ tion, though it does not set it in so clear and affecting
 “ a view, he hath a pleasure which the man who never
 “ observed this harmony between *Reason* and *Revela-*
 “ *tion*, however pious he may be, is a stranger to; and,
 “ other things being equal, is less likely to make ship-
 “ wreck of Faith and a good Conscience. Nay, the
 “ homage which such a one pays to the *Divine*
 “ *Being* is more compleat; for he contemplates God
 “ both as the God of *Nature* and the God of *Grace*,
 “ and hears him speaking to him *in divers manners*, by his
 “ Works, and in his Word, by his own Conscience,
 “ by the universal Reason of mankind, by the Prophets
 “ and Apostles, and by his own Son, the brightness of
 “ his Father's Glory, and the express image of his Per-
 “ son; he attends to the voice of God in whatever way
 “ directed to him, and reverences every notification of
 “ his will, and certainly then is very unjustly charged
 “ with not having a due regard to *Revelation*, which is
 “ one of those ways in which God hath manifested him-
 “ self to his creatures, and by him esteemed the most
 “ perfect, because his regard to *that* is not joined with
 “ a neglect of *all the rest*.”

preaching is never used by Christ or his Apostles *? Where have I said that Christ used a method of preaching fit only to please children and fright fools? Or, Where have I given you any ground for that scandalous suggestion, That I do not believe the Scriptures are able to make men wise to salvation? Or, Where but seem to complain that *St. Paul reasoned* upon nothing? Though you have

* *N. B.* The lower rank of Readers, for whose use *Mr. B.* must be presumed to have published his Book, which is suited to them only, when they hear me charged with a new way of Preaching, which he says is acknowledged by myself to be so, will be apt presently to conclude, either that I preach some new doctrine not taught by Christ and his Apostles, and not barely plead for shewing the reasonableness and excellency of *that* which they taught; or that I *suppress* some doctrine of theirs, laying aside for instance the *promises* and *threatenings* of the Gospel, and not merely contend for the necessity of *consideration* that these promises and threatenings may produce the effect designed by them, *viz.* the conversion of the heart to God. Which latter is the truth of the case. And there is too much room to suspect *Mr. B--'s* willingness that his Readers should thus understand him, for where else is my crime? But if this were his view, his accusing me of a new way of preaching, having nothing to support it, cannot be cleared of the greatest uncharitableness. It would have been impertinent, and something worse, to bring the promises and threatenings of the Gospel into my discourse, if I had not believed the accomplishment of them; and much more to talk of their usefulness to lead men to consideration by working upon their passions, at the same time insinuating to my hearers, that the *object* of their *hope* or *fear* was purely chimerical. So that the only thing on which the Remarker can ground this vile *innuendo* is an argument of the contrary to what he would infer from it.

have been pleased to use these more than friendly freedoms with me, I can scarcely think you take them to be a part of that liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. For my own part, I do not know he hath given his followers any such licence as this, to say all manner of evil against others, falsely, for his sake. On the contrary, to those who are thus used, he says, *Blessed are ye.*

The use and pertinence of what you add about *Episcopius*, Archbishop *Tillotson*, Dr. *Clarke*, &c. it is hard to divine, unless to help extend your bulky Pamphlet to the number of twenty four pages, and to draw a further odium upon the Author of the Sermon, as if he was a slavish admirer of those celebrated writers, and espoused their notions, right or wrong; particularly, *that of Mr. Locke, that the wicked after death shall have no Sense or Being*, which you say I mention without blaming him for it. False again. Since I spend several pages in disproving Mr. *Locke's* interpretation of the first threatening, *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*; unless you mean, that I blamed the *notion* but not the *man*; this I own, because I thought my business was not to censure the man but to confute his notion.

Though I have not by any act of mine made myself answerable for any thing advanced by these great men, yet I shall take this opportunity

portunity to declare, that I honour their names, as esteeming them an honour to their Country; that I bless God for the gifts and talents he hath bestowed upon these, or any other Writers, by which they have been serviceable to mankind; that I look upon good sense, and knowledge, and truth, where-soever I find them, pure or mixed, in *Protestant* or *Papist*, *Orthodox* or *Heretick*, as lawful prize, of which I make all the advantage I can; that I can distinguish between the man and his opinions, highly valuing the one while I dislike the other: and to the *question*, which you introduce and ask with so much triumphant scorn, These are the men that are for rational inquiries, and free thoughts, *and shall the Dissenters lackey after them?* I answer, by no means; either after them, or any other men, however named or revered, if by *lackeying* you mean taking things upon *their authority*, and not that of the *Scripture*; though I will frankly own that, were I to take my faith upon trust, it should be from those that appear to have used the most pains to find out the truth; not from those who while they assume a power to dictate, and determine for others, seldom or never think and reason for themselves. If by *lackeying* you understand imitating them in such things as a man verily believes to be laudable, I reply, not after them only, but after any other persons, be they

they who they will, in whom we find things worthy of our regard and imitation; for I must own I hate that narrow way of thinking, which confines merit to any particular Party, or neglects and undervalues it when it is found in any other.

I thank you for the honourable mention you make of those two Persons whose memory will be ever precious to me, with whatever sinister view you might do it. It is with pleasure I recollect the example they gave of the reality and excellence of every christian virtue in their own lives; how far their parental instructions were from having any thing sower, austere, and discouraging in them, and their government from being severe and rigid; and that they finished life with great christian decency, not busied in spreading scandal against their fellow-Christians, not with their spirits imbittered and ruffled by envious and uncharitable passions, but wholly taken up in exercises becoming their age, and in preparation for that better world on which they were about to enter. I repeat my thanks, Sir, for your having given me an opportunity to offer up this small tribute of grateful acknowledgement to the memory of those, to whom, under the supreme Author of my Being, I am so much indebted. If they were no philosophers, as you tell the world they were not, yet that they had no

aversion to philosophy they shewed by giving their Son a liberal education.

After having poured out all this calumny from the fulness of your heart, or some body's else, you conclude, in a most surprising manner, with a solemn appeal to heaven, calling God to record upon your soul (as you had done before in your Letter to the Reverend Mr. *D*——) To what? Not that you were not conscious to any evil passion by which you were biaſſed; but, *directly*, that you did not write out of envy (I suppose you intend this of other passions too) but because you could not be silent to see the way that our Lord took in preaching vilified. But, Sir, had you not thought your manner of writing would naturally make your Readers suspect the contrary, what need was there of this unusual appeal, and repeated too? As the *Psalmist's* words would have been more modest, so, the world will think, more proper and seasonable too, in your case, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

You must allow me, while it is in my thoughts, to be your remembrancer of a friendly admonition you received some years since from a Reverend and Learned Doctor in *L*——n, on a like occasion, but which by your practice you seem to have forgotten,

Not

Not to take the Devil's work out of his hands, and turn accuser of the brethren, which of all persons a good man hath the least warrant to do.

Upon the whole, your Pamphlet serves but the more to confirm me in my *resolution*, not tamely to submit my Faith or Practice to the haughty dictates of any man, or party of men whatsoever; and in my notion of the necessity of mens making more use of their Reason in religious matters, than they ordinarily do; and that Ministers especially should study well the foundations, and immutable nature, of moral good and evil; since to their not doing this it must in a great measure be ascribed, that persons of sincere piety can be guilty of the most shameful indecencies of passion, and even of things which the censorious world will be apt to call by a worse name, and yet put all to the account of christian zeal, making a kind of merit of that part of their conduct which a man of natural honour and benevolence, without much sense of Religion, would blush to imitate.

And now, Sir, I can truly say, that I am sorry for your having publicly exposed yourself, as you have done, in the judgment of all unprejudiced and sensible Readers, who are acquainted with the truth and merits of the cause; and, as for the rest,
you

you may, in case you think it worth your while, please yourself with the ignorant flatteries they bestow upon you. It was with no little concern that I found myself obliged to write to you in this manner. But though, I confess, there are not many compliments in what I here send you, the occasion not admitting them, yet I would fain believe that there is nothing that offends against Religion and good manners. It is without my being aware of it, if I have let any thing of that nature escape me. You know, Sir, notwithstanding some Letters written by you to two very worthy Divines in this neighbourhood which were shewn me on the same argument, and in the like opprobrious stile, I continued silent; I drew up an answer indeed, once and again, but suppressed it, being willing to try if I could not this way overcome you, and loath, if it could be avoided, to give you any disturbance in your old age. And even now that you have carried the affair into the publick, and made the world judges of it, endeavouring to possess all you can influence with the same ill opinion you yourself have of me, I should, I believe, have trusted the issue to the judgment of disinterested persons, without any more ado, if several of my friends had not again and again told me, that I should be wanting to myself, to the cause
of

of truth and liberty, and even to you, Reverend Sir, if I suffered so many heavy charges brought against me to pass uncontradicted, and uncensured. One thing that helped to determine me was, that I perceived your authority began already to be quoted. *What*, said a man of great zeal and little knowledge, to another that would not submit to his opinion concerning the sense of some passages in St. Paul's Epistles, *You are one of those too that are for a new Translation of the Bible! But pray, let us know when the Apostle is to be believed, and when not.*

I shall conclude my Letter with a few good wishes, *viz.* That the Ministers of the Gospel may have salt in themselves, and peace one with another, especially having so many other difficulties and discouragements to struggle with. For you, Reverend Sir, that what remains of the evening of your days may be calm and serene, useful and happy; and when the time comes for your departure out of this world, you may leave it in a more christian temper than that which you at present discover. And finally, for myself, that in simplicity and godly sincerity I may have my conversation in the world, not giving any real ground for reproach; and then, whatever quarter it comes from, not troubling myself about it, regarding it only as an exercise of that charity and
pati-

patience which I desire may always have possession of my breast. These are my unfeigned prayers to God, in which, I hope, notwithstanding any other differences between us, you will join with,

Reverend SIR,

Your once obliged, and

ever faithful Servant,

Henry Grove.



P O S T-



P O S T S C R I P T.

DR. *Wishart* is such a strange man that I doubt nothing but Reason and Argument will do any good upon him. It will be to little purpose to bring railing accusations against him, to pelt him with ill language, and exclaim, when you do not like an expression, because you do not understand it, *Was this man past all blushing?* As these are methods which the Doctor is above using himself, so he knows how to despise them when made use of against him by others. Nay, you will scarce make a convert of him, should you be able to produce twenty more such notable sayings of good men on their death-beds, as that of his Father in Law Mr. *Halyburton*, who, we have your word for it, was a much greater man than the Doctor; which, I suppose, you expect we should believe on the credit of this weighty sentence *, *O Sirs, I dread mightily that a rational*

* Since the *above* was sent to the Press, I am able, by the assistance of an ingenious Friend, to set the matter relating to Mr. *Halyburton* in a clearer light than I could

tional sort of Religion is coming among us! Now, so far am I from dreading this, provided this Religion which some men are so apprehensive of be *truly rational*, that I venture to say, *come and welcome*; since whatever Religion is *rational*, in the propriety of the term, must needs be *divine*. I hope,
Sir,

could before; not having seen the memoirs of his life till very lately. It is not easy to produce from any Author, the *Remarker himself* always excepted, so flagrant an instance of unfair quotation as this of Mr. *Halyburton's* dying words. Would one have thought that he had immediately explained himself, what he meant by a *rational Religion*, when he saith *that he dreaded mightily that such a Religion was coming in among us?* And that the explanation added shews him to have intended quite another thing than he is cited for by the *Remarker?* Yet this is actually the case. His words, as they are related by the *Collector* of them, are, *O Sirs, I dread mightily that a rational sort of Religion is coming in among us! I mean by it a Religion that consists in a bare attendance on outward duties and ordinances, without the power of godliness.* (*Memoirs of his Life*, p. 199.) I have transcribed the passage, that the Reader may judge how little trust is to be given to some men, when they are alledging authorities to countenance an absurd opinion, or to support an ill-natured accusation of an adversary. The *Prefacer* to these *Memoirs* (who I am informed is an old Minister still living in the neighbourhood of St. *Andrew's*, and Brother in Law to Mr. *Halyburton*) says p. 4. of that Preface —

“ As to what we have of his dying words annexed
 “ to the memoirs of his life, it is but a little we assure
 “ you of what he spoke the last five days before his
 “ death; some of the sweetest and most savoury dis-
 “ courses he had are wholly lost, being *so mangled* by
 “ the Writer that we were forced to drop them; for
 “ great care was taken not to insert any thing but what
 “ he

Sir, though the Doctor was but *a little man*, a person of whose weight and authority you had no great apprehension, when you published your Pamphlet, you will now allow him to be somebody, *since the Magistrates and Town Council of Edinburgh, agreeable to the inclinations (as it is thought) of most of the*

“ he spoke. The occasion of this was, *The Writer was forced to stand at a distance, and out of his sight, because when he observed him writing he was displeas’d, and would not allow it.* Likewise the noise that sometimes was in the room, with People’s speaking to him, their coming in or going out, and ordering things about him, made the Writer *oft lose half a sentence*; neither was it possible for those that revised his dying words to help this.”

Now if we compare this account with the oddness of the epithet *rational* applied to a Religion that *consists in a bare attendance*, &c. it is highly probable (as my Correspondent justly observes) that the expression used by the good man was *a notional sort of Religion*; and this, perhaps, is not the only instance in which a *wrong hearing* in the Collector of these dying words may have occasioned a *wrong rehearsing* of them. And it may be left to the judgment of every understanding person, whether, in the circumstances above recited, it was possible for those who revised these dying words, with all their care, to make us *sure* of their having transmitted them to us *exactly as they were spoken*. But allowing the epithet *rational*, as it stands, to be genuine, though certainly exceeding improper to denote a mere formal outside Religion, I may appeal to the conscience of Mr. Ball, or, if he never read the Book quoted, *that* of the Person who furnished him with this passage, whether he really believes either Dr. Wisbart or myself to be an advocate for a Religion that consists in a bare attendance on outward duties without the power of godliness; and, if not, what name this way of citing authors,

in

the Members of the University, as it was with the advice of the Ministers of the Town, who are by the Foundation to be advised with in that matter, have chosen him their Principal, and the Town of Edinburgh have made choice of him to be one of their Ministers there. If I congratulate him upon this advancement, it is not so much from the personal and private regard which I have for the Doctor, though very great, as on the account of the *Publick*, to which he will have opportunities of being more extensively serviceable in this higher station of life; and because I am
well

in which they are made to *say* what they are known not to *mean*, deserves to be called by. I make no doubt, the *very Reverend Principal* will join with me in dreading mightily that such a sort of Religion is coming in among us; and in thinking that whenever it prevails it will in a great measure be owing to mens discarding the use of Reason and common sense in Religion; since no man who considers things as he ought, and reasons upon them, will imagine that, when the *means*, as *means*, have no value but with regard to their *end*, a bare formal attendance on the external services of Religion, can be acceptable to *God*, or profitable to *man*, not answering the great design of all such duties, *viz.* to promote that temper of mind, and course of life, which is the very soul and vital power of all true Religion. For my own part, I see no other way of guarding against the two *extremes* of *formality* on the one hand, and *enthusiasm* on the other, but a sober use of our reasoning faculty, without which *true* Religion and *false*, the *appearance* and the *reality* are all upon a level.

My Correspondent adds, I am well assured that none of Mr. *Halyburton's* Writings which have been printed since his death were by him intended for the *Publick*, or finished with that view.

well satisfied, if he accepts the service, he will not deceive the expectations the world hath from his abilities and integrity.

Before I close the Postscript I would recommend to your consideration, in your calmer minutes, the following places of Scripture, among many others, *Mat. vii. 12. John xv. 12. Phil. iv. 8. 1 Cor. xiii.* containing a description of *Charity*, which, I am sorry, when it is so particular and elevated, should warm and impress the hearts of Christians no more; *James iii. 17. iv. 11, 12.* Next to these, when you have leisure, you will do well to peruse some passages of the excellent Mr. *Baxter*, that *Rational Divine*, to whose judgment, I take it, you formerly payed some regard, whatever you do now.

Mr. *Baxter's End of Doctrinal Controversies*, Chap. 16. of the State of *Heathens*, and others, that have not the Gospel; particularly, §. 6. “ They think (*viz.* those that believe “ the *Heathens* may be saved, of whom Mr. “ *Baxter* himself was one) that the contrary “ minded, by over-doing, are the greatest “ hinderers of the *Christian Faith*, and promoters of *infidelity* (mark that) while they “ make it seem so contrary to God’s own “ attributes, and to human interest, and to “ be a doctrine not of *glad* but of *sadest* “ tidings to mankind, *viz.* That none shall “ be saved that hear not the Gospel, when

“ it is few comparatively that ever heard it,
 “ or can hear it.”

And again, §. 37. “ Having delivered
 “ that in this great question, which seemeth
 “ to me agreeable to God’s word, I advise
 “ those that use to assault such things with
 “ reproach, which they find reproached by
 “ their party, to remember that God is love,
 “ and Christ is the Saviour of the world,
 “ and the *pharisaical appropriators of mercy*
 “ *and salvation* seldom know what spirit
 “ they are of.”

Saints Everlasting Rest, Pref. to the Second
Part, §. 5. “ Another great exception of
 “ the same man is, that, I seek to satisfy
 “ *Reason* so much of the Scriptures authority.
 “ —It is too near the *Socinian way*.—Is it
 “ not a shame that learned men should
 “ charge this very opinion in *Chillingworth*,
 “ *Dr. Hammond*, and others, as guilty of *So-*
 “ *cinianism*?—How could all the wits in the
 “ world do more to advance *Socinianism*
 “ than these men do, by making men be-
 “ lieve that only the *Socinians* have *Reason*
 “ for their *Religion*? Which, if it were true
 “ (as nothing less) who would not turn to
 “ them? And what more can be done to the
 “ disgrace and ruin of Christianity, than to
 “ make the world believe we have no *Rea-*
 “ *son* for it?”

And again, §. 8. “ If *Reason* were of
 “ no more use here then some make it, as
 “ it

“ it were in vain to preach or write in this
 “ point (for *Christianity*) so it would follow,
 “ that he that is drunk or mad, or an in-
 “ fant (if not a brute) were the fittest to
 “ make a Christian ; which is so vile an
 “ imagination, that I dare say, *he that hath*
 “ *the best and rightest Reason, and by confi-*
 “ *deration makes the most use of it is the best*
 “ *Christian, and doth God best service ; and*
 “ that all sin is on the contrary, for want
 “ of *right Reason*, and the using it by con-
 “ sideration. But, *methinks I should not need*
 “ *to plead for Reason, till beasts can speak and*
 “ *plead against me.* But yet I must tell you
 “ if you heard the accusation, you would
 “ excuse my apology. If none but the *ig-*
 “ *norant* be an enemy to *knowledge*, sure
 “ none but the *unreasonable* is an enemy to
 “ *Reason.*”

Reasons of the Christian Religion, p. 491.

“ I perceive not that any considerable number
 “ are troubled with doubtings of the truth
 “ of the Christian Faith, in a prevalent de-
 “ gree, who are well convinced of these an-
 “ tecedent verities of the *Deity*, and of the
 “ *natural* obligation and *necessity* of holiness,
 “ and of the *immortality of the Soul*, or of
 “ a future life of rewards and punishment,
 “ and that live in any reasonable conformity
 “ to those natural principles which they
 “ profess ; for when natural evidence hath
 “ sufficiently convinced a man that he is

“ obliged to be holy, in absolute obedience
 “ and love to his Creator, through the hopes
 “ and fears of another life, he is very much
 “ prepared to close with the design and doc-
 “ trine of the Gospel, which is so far from
 “ contradicting this, that it doth but confirm
 “ it, and shew us the way by which it may
 “ most certainly be brought to pass. And
 “ therefore my observation and experiences
 “ constrain me to think, that there is no
 “ point I have insisted on which so much
 “ calls for my vindication, as the third,
 “ about the *life to come*. I know there is
 “ a sort of over-wise, and over-doing Di-
 “ vines, who will tell their followers in
 “ private that the method of this Treatise is
 “ perverse, as appealing too much to *natu-
 “ ral light*, and over-valuing *human Reason* ;
 “ and that I should have done no more, but
 “ shortly tell men, that all which God
 “ speaketh in his word is true; and that
 “ *propria luce* it is evident that the Scrip-
 “ ture is the Word of God; and that to all
 “ God’s elect he will give his Spirit to cause
 “ them to discern it; and that this much
 “ alone had been better than all these dis-
 “ putes and reasons: but these overwise
 “ men, who need themselves no Reason for
 “ their Religion, and judge accordingly of
 “ others, and think that those men who
 “ rest not in the authority of Jesus Christ
 “ should rest in theirs, are many of them
 “ so

“ so well acquainted with me as not to expect that I should trouble them in their way, or reason against them, who speak against Reason even *in the greatest matters which our Reason is given us for*. As much as I am addicted to scribbling, I can quietly dismiss this sort of men, and love their zeal, without the labour of opening their ignorance.”

To what you say, *p.* 24. against taking the Confession of Candidates for the Ministry only in Scripture words, let Mr. *Baxter* answer, *Saints Everlasting Rest, Preface to the Second Part*,—“ Two things have set the Church on fire, and been the plagues of it above one thousand years. 1. Enlarging our Creed, and making more fundamentals than ever God made. 2. Composing, and so *imposing*, our Creeds and Confessions in our own words and phrases. When men have learned more manners and humility than to accuse God’s language as too general and obscure (as if they could mend it) and have more dread of God, and compassion on themselves, than to make those to be fundamentals or certainties which God never made so; and when they reduce their Confessions, (1.) To their due extent. And, (2.) To *Scripture phrase* (that Dissenters may not scruple subscribing) then, and (I think) never till then, shall the Church have peace about Doctrinals. It seems to me

“ no heinous Socinian notion which Chilling-
“ worth is blamed for, viz. Let all men believe
“ the Scripture, and that only, and endeavour
“ to believe it in the true sense (and promise
“ this) and require no more of others, and
“ they shall find this not only a better, but
“ the only, means to suppress heresy, and restore
“ unity.”





FOUR
ESSAYS
ON

BENEFICENCE, BENEVOLENCE,
NOVELTY, and the HUMAN SOUL.

1714.



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* E S S A Y I.

On the Pleasure of BENEFICENCE.

*Dicitis, omnis in imbecillitate est et gratia, et
caritas.* Cicero de nat. Deor.

MAN may be considered in two views, as a reasonable, and as a sociable Being ; capable of becoming himself either happy or miserable, and of contributing to the happiness or misery of his fellow creatures. Suitably to this double capacity, the contriver of human nature hath wisely furnished it with two principles of action, self-love and benevolence ; designed one of them to render man wakeful to his own personal interest, the other to dispose him for giving his utmost assistance to all engaged in the same pursuit. This is such an account of our frame, so agreeable to Reason, so much
for

* These Four Essays were first printed in the *Eighth* Volume of the *Spectator*. N^o. 588, 601, 626, 635.

for the honour of our Maker, and the credit of our species, that it may appear somewhat unaccountable what should induce men to represent human nature as they do under characters of disadvantage, or, having drawn it with a little and sordid aspect, what pleasure they can possibly take in such a picture. Do they reflect that it is their own, and, if we will believe themselves, is not more odious than the original?

One of the first that talked in this lofty strain of our nature was *Epicurus*. Beneficence, would his followers say, is all founded in weakness; and, whatever he pretended, the kindness that passeth between men and men is by every man directed to himself. This, it must be confessed, is of a piece with the rest of that hopeful philosophy, which having patched man up out of the four elements, attributes his Being to Chance, and derives all his actions from an unintelligible declination of atoms. And for these glorious discoveries the Poet is beyond measure transported in the praises of his hero, as if he must needs be something more than man, only for an endeavour to prove that man is in nothing superior to beasts.

In this school was Mr. *Hobbes* instructed to speak after the same manner, if he did not rather draw his knowledge from an observation of his own temper; for he somewhere unluckily lays down this as a rule,
“ That

“ That from the similitudes of thoughts
“ and passions of one man to the thoughts
“ and passions of another, whosoever looks
“ into himself, and considers what he doth
“ when he thinks, hopes, fears, &c. and
“ upon what grounds, he shall hereby read
“ and know what are the thoughts and
“ passions of all other men upon the like
“ occasions.” Now we will allow Mr.

Hobbes to know best how he was inclined; but in earnest, I should be heartily out of conceit with myself, if I thought myself of this unamiable temper, as he affirms, and should have as little kindness for my self as for any body in the world. Hitherto I always imagined that kind and benevolent propensions were the original growth of the heart of man, and, however checked and overtoped by counter inclinations that have since sprung up within us, have still some force in the worst of tempers, and a considerable influence on the best. And, methinks, it is a fair step towards the proof of this, that the most beneficent of all beings is he who hath an absolute fullness of perfection in himself, who gave existence to the universe, and so cannot be supposed to want that which he communicated, without diminishing from the plentitude of his own power and happiness.

The Philosophers before mentioned have indeed done all that in them lay to invalidate
this

this argument; for placing the gods in a state of the most elevated blessedness, they describe them as selfish as we poor miserable mortals can be, and shut them out from all concern for mankind, upon the score of their having no need of us. But if he that siteth in the heavens wants not us, we stand in continual need of him; and surely, next to the survey of the immense treasures of his own mind, the most exalted pleasures he receives is from beholding millions of creatures, lately drawn out of the gulph of non-existence, rejoicing in the various degrees of being and happiness imparted to them.

And as this is the true, the glorious character of the Deity, so in forming a reasonable creature he would not, if possible, suffer his image to pass out of his hands unadorned with a resemblance of himself in this most lovely part of his nature. For what complacency could a mind, whose love is as unbounded as his knowledge, have in a work so unlike himself; a creature that should be capable of knowing and conversing with a vast circle of objects, and love none but himself? What proportion would there be between the head and the heart of such a creature, its affections and its understanding? Or could a society of such creatures, with no other bottom but *self-love* on which to maintain a commerce, ever flourish? Reason, it is certain, would oblige every man to
pursue

purſue the general happineſs, as the means to procure and eſtabliſh his own; and yet if, beſides this conſideration, there were not a natural inſtinct prompting men to deſire the welfare and ſatiſfaction of others, ſelf-love, in the defiance of the admonitions of Reaſon, would quickly run all things into a ſtate of war and confuſion.

As nearly intereſted as the ſoul is in the fate of the body, our provident Creator ſaw it neceſſary, by the conſtant returns of hunger and thirſt, thoſe importunate appetites, to put it in mind of its charge; knowing, that if we ſhould eat and drink no oftner than cold abſtracted ſpeculation ſhould put us upon theſe exerciſes, and then leave it to Reaſon to preſcribe the quantity, we ſhould ſoon refine ourſelves out of this bodily life. And indeed it is obvious to remark, that we follow nothing heartily, unleſs carried to it by inclinations which anticipate our Reaſon, and, like a biaſs, draw the mind ſtrongly towards it. In order, therefore, to eſtabliſh a perpetual intercourſe of benefits amongſt mankind, their Maker would not fail to give them this generous prepoſſeſſion of *benevolence*, if, as I have ſaid, it were poſſible. And from whence can we go about to argue its impoſſibility? Is it inconſiſtent with *ſelf-love*? Are their motions contrary? No more than the diurnal rotation of the earth is oppoſed to its annual; or its motion round its own center,

center, which might be improved as an illustration of *self-love*, to that which whirls it about the common center of the world, answering to universal *benevolence*. Is the force of *self-love* abated, or its interest prejudiced by *benevolence*? So far from it, that *benevolence*, though a distinct principle, is extremely serviceable to *self-love*, and then doth most service when it is least designed.

But to descend from Reason to matter of fact; the pity which arises on sight of persons in distress, and the satisfaction of mind which is the consequence of having removed them into a happier state, are instead of a thousand arguments to prove such a thing as *a disinterested benevolence*. Did pity proceed from a reflection we make upon our liability to the same ill accidents we see befall others, it were nothing to the present purpose; but this is assigning an artificial cause of a natural passion, and can by no means be admitted as a tolerable account of it, because children and persons most thoughtless about their own condition, and incapable of entering into the prospects of futurity, feel the most violent touches of compassion. And then as to that charming delight which immediately follows the giving joy to another, or relieving his sorrow, and is, when the objects are numerous, and the kindness of importance, really inexpressible, what can this be owing to but a consciousness of a
man's

man's having done something praise-worthy, and expressive of a great soul? Whereas, if in all this he only sacrificed to vanity and self-love, as there would be nothing brave in actions that make the most shining appearance, so nature would not have rewarded them with this divine pleasure; nor could the commendations, which a person receives for benefits done upon selfish views, be at all more satisfactory, than when he is applauded for what he doth without design; because in both cases the ends of *self-love* are equally answered. The conscience of approving oneself a benefactor to mankind is the noblest recompence for being so; doubtless it is, and the most interested cannot propose any thing so much to their own advantage; notwithstanding which, the inclination is nevertheless unselfish. The pleasure which attends the gratification of our hunger and thirst, is not the cause of these appetites; they are previous to any such prospect; and so likewise is the desire of doing good; with this difference, that being seated in the intellectual part, this last, though antecedent to Reason, may yet be improved and regulated by it, and, I will add, is no otherwise a virtue than as it is so.

Thus have I contended for the dignity of that nature I have the honour to partake of, and, after all the evidence produced, think I have a right to conclude, against the

Motto

Motto of this Essay, that there is such a thing as *generosity* in the world. Though if I were under a mistake in this, I should say as *Cicero* in relation to the immortality of the soul, *I willingly err*; and should believe it very much for the interest of mankind to lie under the same delusion. For the contrary notion naturally tends to dispirit the mind, and sinks it into a meanness fatal to the godlike zeal of doing good. As on the other hand, it teaches people to be ungrateful, by possessing them with a persuasion concerning their benefactors, that they have no regard to them in the benefits they bestow. Now he that banishes *gratitude* from among men, by so doing stops up the stream of *beneficence*. For though in conferring kindnesses, a truly generous man doth not aim at a return, yet he looks to the qualities of the person obliged, and as nothing renders a person more unworthy of a benefit, than his being without all resentment of it, he will not be extremely forward to oblige such a man.





ESSAY II.

On BENEVOLENCE.

Ὁ ἀνθρώπος ἐνεργετὸς περιχώρας.

Antonin. Lib. 9.

NOTWITHSTANDING a narrow contracted temper be that which obtains most in the world, we must not therefore conclude this to be the genuine characteristick of mankind; because there are some who delight in nothing so much as in doing good, and receive more of their happiness at second hand, or by rebound from others, than by direct and immediate sensation. Now tho' these heroick souls are but few, and to appearance so far advanced above the groveling multitude, as if they were of another order of beings, yet in reality their nature is the same, moved by the same springs, and endowed with all the same essential qualities, only cleared, refined, and cultivated.

Water is the same fluid body in winter and in summer; when it stands stiffened in ice, as when it flows along in gentle streams,

gladdening a thousand fields in its progress. It is a property of the heart of man to be diffusive; its kind wishes spread abroad over the face of the creation; and if there be those, as we may observe too many of them, who are all wrapt up in their own dear selves, without any visible concern for their species, let us suppose that their good-nature is frozen, and by the prevailing force of some contrary quality restrained in its operations. I shall therefore endeavour to assign some of the principal checks upon this generous propension of the human soul, which will enable us to judge whether, and by what method, this most useful principle may be unfettered, and restored to its native freedom of exercise.

The first and leading cause is an unhappy complexion of body. The heathens, ignorant of the true source of *moral evil*, generally charged it on the obliquity of matter, which, being eternal and independent, was incapable of change in any of its properties, even by the Almighty Mind, who, when he came to fashion it into a world of beings, must take it as he found it. This notion, as most others of theirs, is a composition of truth and error. That matter is eternal, that from the first union of a soul to it, it perverted its inclinations, and that the ill influence it hath upon the mind is not to be corrected by God himself, are all very

very great errors, occasioned by a truth as evident, that the capacities and dispositions of the soul depend, to a great degree, on the bodily temper. As there are some fools, others are knaves, by constitution; and particularly, it may be said of many, that they are born with an illiberal cast of mind, the matter which composes them is tenacious as birdlime, and a kind of cramp draws their hands and their hearts together, that they never care to open them unless to grasp at more. It is a melancholy lot this; but attended with one advantage above theirs, to whom it would be as painful to forbear good offices, as it is to these men to perform them; that whereas persons naturally beneficent often mistake instinct for virtue, by reason of the difficulty of distinguishing when one rules them and when the other.

Men of the opposite character may be more certain of the motive that predominates in every action. If they cannot confer a benefit with that ease and frankness which are necessary to give it a grace in the eye of the world, in requital, the real merit of what they do is enhanced by the opposition they surmount in doing it. The strength of their virtue is seen in rising against the weight of nature, and every time they have the resolution to discharge their duty, they make a sacrifice of inclination to conscience, which is always too grateful to let its followers go

without suitable marks of its approbation. Perhaps the entire cure of this ill quality is no more possible, than of some distempers that descend by inheritance. However, a great deal may be done by a course of *beneficence* obstinately persisted in; this, if any thing, being a likely way of establishing a moral habit, which shall be somewhat of a counterpoise to the force of mechanism. Only it must be remembered, that we do not intermit, upon any pretence whatsoever, the custom of doing good, in regard if there be the least cessation, nature will watch the opportunity to return, and in a short time to recover the ground it was so long in quitting: for there is this difference between mental habits, and such as have their foundation in the body, that these last are in their nature more forcible and violent, and, to gain upon us, need only not to be opposed; whereas the former must be continually reinforced with fresh supplies, or they will languish and die away. And this suggests the reason why good habits, in general, require longer time for their settlement than bad; and yet are sooner displaced; the reason is, that vicious habits (as drunkenness for instance) produce a change in the body, which the others not doing, must be maintained the same way they are acquired, by the mere dint of industry, resolution, and vigilance.

Another

Another thing which fufpends the operations of *benevolence*, is the love of the world, proceeding from a falfe notion men have taken up, that an abundance of the world is an effential ingredient in the happinefs of life. Wordly things are of fuch a quality as to leffen upon dividing, fo that the more partners there are, the lefs muft fall to every man's private fhare. The confequence of this is, that they look upon one another with an evil eye, each imagining all the reft to be embarked in an intereft, that cannot take place but to his prejudice. Hence are thofe eager competitions for wealth or power; hence one man's fuccefs becomes another's difappointment; and, like pretenders to the fame miftrefs, they can feldom have common charity for their rivals. Not that they are naturally difpofed to quarrel and fall out, but it is natural for a man to prefer himfelf to all others, and to fecure his own intereft firft. If that which men efteem their happinefs were like the light, the fame fufficient and unconfined good, whether ten thoufand enjoy the benefit of it, or but one, we fhould fee mens good-will, and kind endeavours, would be as univerfal.

*Homo qui erranti comiter monftrat viam,
Quafi lumen de fuo lumine accendat, facit,
Nihilominus ipfi luceat, cum illi accenderit.*

But, unluckily, mankind agree in making choice of objects which inevitably ingage them in perpetual differences. Learn therefore, like a wise man, the true estimate of things. Desire not more of the world than is necessary to accommodate you in passing through it; look upon every thing beyond, not as useless only, but burthensome. Place not your quiet in things, which you cannot have without putting others beside them, and thereby making them your enemies; and which, when attained, will give you more trouble to keep, than satisfaction in the enjoyment. Virtue is a good of a nobler kind; it grows by communication, and so little resembles earthly riches, that the more hands it is lodged in, the greater is every man's particular stock. So, by propagating and mingling their fires, not only all the lights of a branch together cast a more extensive brightness, but each single light burns with a stronger flame. And lastly, take this along with you, that if wealth be an instrument of pleasure, the greatest pleasure it can put into your power, is that of doing good. It is worth considering, that the organs of sense act within a narrow compass, and the appetites will soon say they have enough. Which of the two therefore is the happier man? He who confining all his regard to the gratification of his own
appe-

appetites, is capable but of short fits of pleasure? Or the man, who, reckoning himself a sharer in the satisfactions of others, especially those which come to them by his means, enlarges the sphere of his happiness?

The last enemy to *benevolence* I shall mention is uneasiness of any kind. A guilty, or a discontented mind, a mind ruffled by ill fortune, disconcerted by its own passions, sowerd by neglect, or fretting at disappointments, hath not leisure to attend to the necessity or reasonableness of a kindness desired, nor a taste for those pleasures which wait on *beneficence*, which demand a calm and unpolluted heart to relish them. The most miserable of all beings is the most envious; as on the other hand, the most communicative is the happiest. And if you are in search of the seat of perfect love and friendship, you will not find it till you come to the region of the blessed, where happiness, like a refreshing stream, flows from heart to heart in an endless circulation, and is preserved sweet and untainted by the motion. It is old advice, if you have a favour to request of any one, to observe the softest times of address, when the soul, in a flush of good humour, takes a pleasure to shew itself pleased. Persons conscious of their own integrity, satisfied with themselves, and their condition, and full of confidence in a supreme Being, and the hope of immortality,

survey all about them with a flow of goodwill. As trees which like their soil, they shoot out in expressions of kindness, and bend beneath their own precious load, to the hand of the gatherer. Now if the mind be not thus easy, it is an infallible sign that it is not in its natural state. Place the mind in its right posture, it will immediately discover its innate propension to *beneficence*.





ESSAY III.

On NOVELTY.

—*Dulcique animos novitate tenebo.* Ov. Met. L. 1.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

WHEN I have seen young Puffs playing her wanton gambols, and with a thousand antick shapes express her own gaiety at the same time that she moved mine, while the old Grannum hath sat by with a most exemplary gravity, unmoved at all that past, it hath made me reflect what should be the occasion of humours so opposite in two creatures, between whom there was no visible difference but that of age; and I have been able to resolve it into nothing else but *the force of novelty.*

In every species of creatures, those who have been least time in the world appear best pleased with their condition: for, besides that to a new comer the world hath a freshness on it that strikes the sense after a most agreeable manner, *Being* itself, unattended with
any

any great variety of enjoyments, excites a sensation of pleasure. But as age advances, every thing seems to wither, the senses are disgusted with their old entertainments, and existence turns flat and insipid. We may see this exemplified in mankind. The Child, let him be free from pain, and gratified in his change of toys, is diverted with the smallest trifle. Nothing disturbs the mirth of the Boy, but a little punishment or confinement. The Youth must have more violent pleasures to employ his time. The Man loves the hurry of an active life, devoted to the pursuits of wealth or ambition. And lastly, Old Age, having lost its capacity for these avocations, becomes its own insupportable burthen. This variety may in part be accounted for by the vivacity and decay of the faculties; but I believe is chiefly owing to this, that the longer we have been in possession of Being, the less sensible is the gust we have of it; and the more it requires of adventitious amusements to relieve us from the satiety and weariness it brings along with it.

And as *novelty* is of a very powerful, so of a most extensive influence. Moralists have long since observed it to be the source of admiration, which lessens in proportion to our familiarity with objects, and upon a thorough acquaintance is utterly extinguished. But I think it hath not been so commonly remarked,

remarked, that all the other passions depend considerably on the same circumstance. What is it but *novelty* that awakens desire, enhances delight, kindles anger, provokes envy, inspires horror? To this cause we must ascribe it, that love languishes with fruition, and friendship itself is recommended by intervals of absence: hence monsters, by use, are beheld without loathing, and the most enchanting beauty without rapture. That emotion of the spirits in which passion consists, is usually the effect of surprize, and as long as it continues, heightens the agreeable or disagreeable qualities of its object; but as this emotion ceases (and it ceases with the *novelty*) things appear in another light, and affect us even less than might be expected from their proper energy, for having moved us too much before.

It may not be an useless inquiry how far the love of *novelty* is the unavoidable growth of nature, and in what respects it is peculiarly adapted to the present state. To me it seems impossible, that a reasonable creature should rest absolutely satisfied in any acquisitions whatever, without endeavouring further; for after its highest improvements, the mind hath an idea of an infinity of things still behind worth knowing, to the knowledge of which therefore it cannot be indifferent; as by climbing up a hill in the midst of a wide plain, a man hath his prospect

pect enlarged, and, together with that, the bounds of his desires. Upon this account, I cannot think he detracts from the state of the blessed, who conceives them to be perpetually employed in fresh searches into nature, and to eternity advancing into the fathomless depths of the divine perfections. In this thought there is nothing but what doth honour to these glorified spirits; provided still it be remembered, that their desire of more proceeds not from their disrelishing what they possess; and the pleasure of a new enjoyment is not with them measured by its *novelty* (which is a thing merely foreign and accidental) but by its real intrinsic value. After an acquaintance of many thousand years with the works of God, the beauty and magnificence of the creation fills them with the same pleasing wonder and profound awe, which *Adam* felt himself seized with as he first opened his eyes upon this glorious scene. Truth captivates with unborrowed charms, and whatever hath once given satisfaction will always do it; in all which they have manifestly the advantage of us, who are so much governed by sickly and changeable appetites, that we can with the greatest coldness behold the stupendous displays of omnipotence, and be in transports at the puny essays of human skill; throw aside speculations of the sublimest nature and vastest importance into some obscure corner of the mind,

mind, to make room for new notions of no consequence at all; are even tired of health, because not enlivened with alternate pain, and prefer the first reading of an indifferent author, to the second or third perusal of one whose merit and reputation are established.

Our being thus formed serves many useful purposes in the present state. It contributes not a little to the advancement of learning; for, as *Cicero* takes notice—That which makes men willing to undergo the fatigues of philosophical disquisitions, is not so much the greatness of objects as their *novelty*—It is not enough that there is field and game for the chase, and that the understanding is prompted with a restless thirst of knowledge, effectually to rouse the soul, sunk into the state of sloth and indolence; it is also necessary that there be an uncommon pleasure annexed to the first appearance of truth in the mind. This pleasure being exquisite for the time it lasts, but transient, it hereby comes to pass that the mind grows into an indifference to its former notions, and passes on after new discoveries, in hope of repeating the delight. It is with knowledge as with wealth, the pleasure of which lies more in making endless additions, than in taking a review of our old store. There are some inconveniences that follow this temper, if not guarded against, particularly
this,

this, that through a too great eagerness of something new we are many times impatient of staying long enough upon a question that requires some time to resolve it; or, which is worse, persuade ourselves that we are masters of the subject before we are so, only to be at the liberty of going upon a fresh scent; in Mr. *Locke's* words, *we see a little, presume a great deal, and so jump to the conclusion.*

A further advantage of our inclination for *novelty*, as at present circumstantiated, is, that it annihilates all the boasted distinctions among mankind. Look not up with envy to those above thee. Sounding titles, stately buildings, fine gardens, gilded chariots, rich equipages, what are they? They dazzle every one but the possessor; to him that is accustomed to them they are cheap and regardless things; they supply him not with brighter images, or more sublime satisfactions than the plain man may have, whose small estate will just enable him to support the charge of a simple unencumbered life. He enters heedless into his rooms of state, as you or I do under our poor sheds. The noble paintings and costly furniture are lost on him; he sees them not: as how can it be otherwise, when by custom, a fabrick infinitely more grand and finished, that of the universe, stands unobserved by the inhabitants, and the everlasting lamps of heaven are

are lighted up in vain, for any notice that mortals take of them? Thanks to indulgent nature, which not only placed her children originally upon a level, but still, by the strength of this principle, in a great measure preserves it, in spite of all the care of a man, to introduce artificial distinctions.

To add no more,—Is not this fondness for *novelty*, which makes us out of conceit with all we already have, a convincing proof of a future state? Either man was made in vain, or this is not the only world he was made for: for there cannot be a greater instance of vanity, than that to which man is liable, to be deluded from the cradle to the grave with fleeting shadows of happiness. His pleasures, and those not considerable neither, die in the possession, and fresh enjoyments do not rise fast enough to fill up half his life with satisfaction. When I see persons sick of themselves, any longer than they are called away by something that is of force to chain down the present thought; when I see them hurry from country to town, and then from the town back again into the country, continually shifting posture, and placing life in all the different lights they can think of, *Surely*, say I to myself, *life is vain, and the man beyond expression stupid or prejudiced, who from the vanity of life cannot gather he is designed for immortality.*



ESSAY IV.

*On the large capacities of the HUMAN SOUL,
and the perfection of happiness for which it is
designed.*

*Sentio te sedem hominum ac domum contemplari ; quæ
si tibi parva (ut est) ita videtur, hæc cœlestia semper
spectato ; illa humana contemnit.*

Cicero Somn. Scip.

IF the universe be the creature of an intelligent mind, this mind could have no immediate regard to himself in producing it. He needed not to make trial of his omnipotence, to be informed what effects were within its reach ; the world as existing in his eternal idea was then as beautiful as now it is drawn forth into being ; and in the immense abyss of his essence are contained far brighter scenes than will be ever set forth to view ; it being impossible that the great author of nature should bound his own power by giving existence to a system of creatures so perfect that he cannot improve upon it by any other exertions of his almighty Will.

Will. Between *finite* and *infinite* there is an unmeasured interval, not to be filled up in endless ages; for which reason, the most excellent of all God's works must be equally short of what his power is able to produce as the most imperfect, and may be exceeded with the same ease.

This thought hath made some imagine, (what, it must be confest, is not impossible) that the unfathomed space is ever teeming with new births, the younger still inheriting a greater perfection than the elder. But as this doth not fall within my present view, I shall content myself with taking notice, that the consideration now mentioned proves undeniably, that the ideal worlds in the divine understanding yield a prospect incomparably more ample, various, and delightful, than any created world can do: and that therefore as it is not to be supposed that God should make a world merely of inanimate matter, however diversified; or inhabited only by creatures of no higher an order than brutes; so the end for which he designed his reasonable offspring is the contemplation of his works, the injoyment of himself, and in both to be happy, having, to this purpose, endowed them with correspondent faculties and desires. He can have no greater pleasure from a bare review of his works, than from the survey of his own ideas, but we may be assured that he is well pleased in the

satisfaction derived to beings capable of it, and, for whose entertainment, he hath erected this immense theatre. Is not this more than an intimation of our *immortality*? Man, who when considered as on his probation for a happy existence hereafter, is the most remarkable instance of divine wisdom; if we cut him off from all relation to eternity, is the most wonderful and unaccountable composition in the whole creation. He hath capacities to lodge a much greater variety of knowledge than he will be ever master of, and an unsatisfied curiosity to tread the secret paths of Nature and Providence: but, with this, his organs in their present structure, are rather fitted to serve the necessities of a vile body, than to minister to his understanding; and from the little spot to which he is chained, he can frame but wandering guesses concerning the innumerable worlds of light that encompass him, which, tho' in themselves of a prodigious bigness, do but just glimmer in the remote spaces of the heavens; and, when with a great deal of time and pains he hath laboured a little way up the steep ascent of truth, and beholds with pity the groveling multitude beneath, in a moment, his foot slides, and he tumbles down headlong into the grave.

Thinking on this, I am obliged to believe, in justice to the Creator of the world, that there is another state when man shall be
better

better situated for contemplation, or rather have it in his power to remove from object to object, and from world to world, and be accommodated with senses, and other helps, for making the quickest and most amazing discoveries. How doth such a genius as Sir *Isaac Newton*, from amidst the darkness that involves human understanding, break forth, and appear like one of another species! The vast machine, we inhabit, lies open to him, he seems not unacquainted with the general laws that govern it; and while with the transport of a philosopher he beholds and admires the glorious work, he is capable of paying at once a more devout and more rational homage to his Maker. But, alas, how narrow is the prospect even of such a mind! And how obscure to the compass that is taken in by the ken of an angel; or of a soul but newly escaped from its imprisonment in the body!

For my part, I freely indulge my soul in the confidence of its future grandeur; it pleases me to think that I who know so small a portion of the works of the Creator, and with slow and painful steps creep up and down on the surface of this globe, shall e'er long shoot away with the swiftness of imagination, trace out the hidden springs of Nature's operations, be able to keep pace with the heavenly bodies in the rapidity of their career, be a spectator of the long chain

of events in the natural and moral worlds visit the several apartments of the creation, know how they are furnished and how inhabited, comprehend the order, and measure the magnitudes and distances of those orbs, which to us seem disposed without any regular design, and set all in the same circle; observe the dependence of the parts of each system, and (if our minds are big enough to grasp the theory) of the several systems upon one another, from whence results the harmony of the universe. In *eternity* a great deal may be done of this kind. I find it of use to cherish this generous ambition; for besides the secret refreshment it diffuses through my soul, it engages me in an endeavour to improve my faculties, as well as to exercise them conformably to the rank I now hold among reasonable beings, and the hope I have of being once advanced to a more exalted station.

The other, and that the ultimate end of man, is the enjoyment of God, beyond which he cannot form a wish. Dim at best are the conceptions we have of the Supreme Being, who, as it were, keeps his creatures in suspense, neither discovering, nor hiding himself; by which means, the *libertine* hath a handle to dispute his existence, while the most are content to speak him fair, but in their hearts prefer every trifling satisfaction to the favour of their Maker, and ridicule the good man for the singularity of his choice. Will there

there not a time come, when the *free-thinker* shall see his impious schemes overturned, and be made a convert to the truths he hates; when deluded mortals shall be convinced of the folly of their pursuits, and the few wise who followed the guidance of heaven, and, scorning the blandishments of sense and the fordid bribery of the world, aspired to a celestial abode, shall stand possessed of their utmost wish in the vision of the Creator?

Here the mind heaves a thought now and then towards him, and hath some transient glances of his Presence; when, in the instant it thinks itself to have the fastest hold, the object eludes its expectations, and it falls back tired and baffled to the ground. Doubtless there is some more perfect way of conversing with heavenly beings. Are not spirits capable of mutual intelligence, unless immersed in bodies, or by their intervention? Must superior natures depend on inferior for the main privilege of sociable beings, that of conversing with, and knowing each other? What would they have done had matter never been created? I suppose, not have lived in eternal solitude. As incorporeal substances are of a nobler order, so be sure, their manner of intercourse is answerably more expedite and intimate. This method of communication, we call *intellectual vision*, as somewhat analogous to the sense of seeing, which is the medium of our acquaintance with this visible

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world,

world. And in some such way can God make himself the object of immediate intuition to the blessed; and as he can it is not improbable that he will, always condescending, in the circumstances of doing it, to the weakness and proportion of finite minds. His works but faintly represent the image of his perfections, it is a second-hand knowledge: to have a just idea of him, it may be necessary *that we see him as he is*. But what is that? It is something that never entered into the heart of man to conceive; yet, what we can easily conceive, will be a fountain of unspeakable, of everlasting rapture. All created glories will fade and die away in his Presence. Perhaps, it will be my happiness to compare the world with the fair exemplar of it in the divine mind; perhaps, to view the original plan of those wise designs that have been executing in a long succession of ages. Thus employed in finding out his works, and contemplating their author, how shall I fall prostrate and adoring, my body swallowed up in the immensity of matter, my mind in the infinitude of his perfections!





F I V E
L E T T E R S

To the Author of the

St. JAMES'S JOURNAL,

C O N C E R N I N G

The PRESBYTERIANS, Civil Power,
Liberty of the Will, and the Im-
mortality of the Soul.

1722.





* L E T T E R I.

A Defence of the PRESBYTERIANS.

S I R, Taunton, June 27, 1722.

I HOPE your Readers will pardon me, if for once I beg the favour to entertain them, by taking up a part of your paper which you could have filled much more agreeably yourself; the occasion of this request is a Letter of *Cato* in the *London Journal*, of the 16th Instant, * * * * *

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proving, that the Church can be in no danger from the Dissenters, and therefore need not grudge them their *Toleration*, or fear giving them the *Test Act* into the bargain, which is certainly a very honest and obvious argument; but there are several passages in it which we beg leave to consider.

“ The

* These Letters were first published in the *St. James's Journal*. N^o. 10, 16, 17, 42, 47.

“ The Independents, Anabaptists, and Qua-
 “ kers, have, he says, much more favour-
 “ able opinions of the National Clergy than
 “ of the Presbyterians, (the only rivals for
 “ Church Power) from whom they appre-
 “ hend, and have always found much worse
 “ usage than from the Church.” This, you
 must know, he speaks out of a pure kind-
 ness to the Dissenters, whose interest and
 peace he hath very much at heart, and not
 to set them together by the ears. But the
 meaning lies so bare, that, it is to be hoped, the
 wiser part, at least, of every Denomination, will
 be cautious how they give into the snare,
 or by mutual jealousies destroy that happy
 harmony to which they owe all their credit
 and weight as Dissenters. If there was a
 time when the Presbyterians bore too hard
 upon those of other persuasions, it ought to
 be considered that this was when the spirits
 of the nation were chafed with civil dissen-
 sions, which left them not the power of
 thinking so coolly of things as they might
 otherwise have done, and was really more
 the error of the *times* than of the *men*; the
 true principles of liberty, both civil and re-
 ligious, not having been stated with that
 clearness, or defended with that strength of
 argument, then, as they have since been by
 the incomparable Mr. *Locke*, the excellent
 Bishop

Bishop of * *Hereford*, and other good hands. And one fault surely, committed in the times of ignorance, may be forgiven; and ought not, in justice, to be imputed to those, who, besides that they were never personally guilty themselves, are far from justifying them that were.

Did they not, on the contrary, in the beginning of Queen *Anne's* reign, readily concur with the two other Denominations in a Letter to their friends in *New-England*, in behalf of the Quakers there? Than which Letter, by the way, I hardly know whether I have seen any thing that breathes a better spirit, or is more handsomly and strongly penned on the side of liberty, in so small a compass. And, if my memory does not deceive me, the first Address to his present Majesty from the Dissenting Ministers of the three Denominations, contains a glorious testimony to the same cause. All this, methinks, might atone for one slip, not their own, and merit an act of perpetual oblivion. And, of all men, the Baptists and Quakers should be least forward to upbraid the Presbyterians of this age with what was done in a former, when they themselves would reckon it an extreme hardship to be made answer for all the extravagances that have been formerly said or done, by people passing under the same names that they are now known by.

There

* The Reverend and Learned Dr. *Hoadley*, now Bishop of *Winchester*.

There have been fanaticks, enthusiasts, and persecutors in all forms of Religion; but it would be the unjustest thing in the world, to charge whole bodies with the faults or follies of particular men; and, in successive generations, to imagine, that tho' the persons are different, their characters and opinions must be exactly the same. At least, let there be equal dealing, that if the *failings* of their Predecessors must be placed to the account of the Modern Presbyterians, they may be entitled to a share in their *virtues* too; and, upon these terms, they need not be ashamed of their name, or blush at a comparison with their fellow-christians of other distinctions.

Now I am upon this head, there is one thing I cannot but remark, as arguing either vile disingenuity, or as gross ignorance; and that is, that though our Author carefully distinguishes between the Presbyterians and the Independents, yet that the former may not want their load, the sufferings of some in *New-England* on the score of their opinions, are laid to their door, while every body knows that the Churches of *New-England* are of the *Congregational Way*: which I mention not out of any prejudice to the persons of that persuasion, (since as the *American* Independents are now in as generous sentiments as any of the known friends to liberty can be, so their brethren here in *England*,

gland, did in the year 1669 express, by Letter, their dislike of all rigorous proceedings on account of religious differences) but to shew the temper of the man. When he afterwards tells his Readers, that the Presbyterians are candidates for *Church Dominion*, it is a sign he does not know the men, or their scheme; there not being one of many, by what I can judge from the acquaintance I have with them, but is of opinion—That every particular Church or Society of Christian shath full power within itself to regulate its own affairs: nor are their assemblies any proof of the contrary, being no other than prudential and voluntary associations of men, whose business is not to dictate but advise, and, at most, to agree upon *Rules* for their own conduct, not to frame *Canons* and *Decrees* for others.

Their Priests, if his account of them be true, have hawks eyes at the Church-Preferments. And so they had need, to spy them at such a distance; and if they have the eyes, I would be glad to know who have the talons? But when did they discover such a zeal for Preferments? Was it, when some of the most considerable dignities of the Church were offered to Mr. *Baxter* and others, and refused? Was it, when about *two thousand* Ministers left their Places in the Church, because they could not keep them with a good conscience? As remarkable an example of a
great

great number of men acting upon principle, as perhaps any that can be produced since the first golden age of Christianity. Such a noble contempt did the Fathers express for the Temporalities of the Church, when they must either forego them, or resolve to buy them at the price of what they held dearer than life.

And wherein have their Sons shewn themselves to be so perfectly degenerated from this excellent pattern? Many among them are not so very much inferior to the major part of the Established Clergy, but that in case they were minded to venture in the Church-Lottery, they might have the chance of a prize as well as their neighbours; and, at worst, might make a better hand of it than they do among the Dissenters. But, in regard they must offer violence to something in their bosoms, before they can bring themselves to a compliance with the present terms of Conformity, they judge it their best way to continue where they are, without giving themselves the liberty, in the mean while, to censure others, who having different views of the matter, can very honestly go greater lengths than they are able to do. They are not conscious to their having forfeited the testimony which King *Charles* the Second formerly gave some of the principal assertors of the Presbyterian opinions, *viz.* “ That to
 “ his great satisfaction and comfort, he
 “ found

“ found them persons full of affection to
 “ him, of zeal for the peace of the Church
 “ and of the State, and neither enemies to
 “ Episcopacy or Liturgy ; but modestly to
 “ desire such alterations in either, a with-
 “ out shaking foundations, might best allay
 “ present distempers.”

In short, insinuations of ambition and worldliness in others, unsupported by facts, if they prove any thing, do only betray the predominant passions of the man that makes them ; and this they do too plainly, for a frank, honest nature is the furthest in the world from entertaining and propagating evil suspicions of the appearingly innocent : such a one can easily believe that others may have the same indifference to wealth and grandeur, and the same aversion to artifice and disguise, that he finds in himself.

We agree with the Author of the *Journal*,
 “ That the Presbyterians are too inconsidera-
 “ ble both for number and figure, to give the
 “ Church any just apprehensions ;” but then
 we beg leave to add, that their inclination
 to disturb the Establishment is even less,
 much less than their power. They are well
 content that the Established Church, as the fa-
 vourite daughter, should carry away the for-
 tune ; nor do they envy her her beauty, tho’
 they think it would appear with never the
 less advantage, if she dressed somewhat more
 plainly. There is further, I doubt, too
 much

much truth in the observation, “ That when
 “ any grow rich, and leave estates behind
 “ them, their Sons, for the most part, desert
 “ the Dissenting Congregations and Interest ;”
 but how is this more to their reproach, than
 it was to *St. Paul’s*, that *Demas* forsook him
 out of love to the present world ? That their
 cause hath the fate to be espoused by so few
 of the great men of the world, doth not at
 all lessen it in their own esteem ; for tho’
Bellarmino makes numbers and external splen-
 dor *marks* of the true Church, I do not re-
 member that any Protestant Divine or Lay-
 man hath advanced such an assertion.

He compliments the Non-Subscribers with
 being the most considerable for fortune and
 understanding ; how deservedly, let those
 judge who are best able. I fancy they will
 hardly take it for so great a compliment to
 their understandings what he subjoins, “ that
 “ by degrees many of these will in all proba-
 “ bility come into the Church ;” all I can say,
 if they do so, is that they will act even more
 inconsequentially than *Cato* reasons. His re-
 flections on the Church of *Scotland* have so
 little of justice or good-manners in them,
 that he seems to have forgotten that the form
 of government in that part of *Great Britain*,
 is as much the Legal Establishment, as Epif-
 copacy is here ; and to be in a disposition to
 attempt, what he saith no wise man would,
 the removing of the antient land marks.

The

The truth of what he asserts concerning the *Sacramental Test*, I shall not trouble myself to dispute; I would only improve it as an argument of the disinterestedness of the Presbyterians, in that their concern for the repeal of this Act, by which, we have *Cato's* Authority, they would be no gainers, but losers, can be justly attributed to nothing else but a regard to the honour of Religion and the Nation, which, they apprehend, suffers not a little by the prostitution of this *solemn action*; and to a principle of benevolence towards their Protestant brethren and fellow-subjects, whom they are desirous to have placed upon the same foot with themselves for preferment.

Before I conclude, I would beg the Reader to look back on the general character and behaviour of our fault-finder. He first attacked the Clergy in a most outrageous manner, professedly those of the *High Sort* only, but more covertly the whole order; in honour of whom he observes, that any common mechanick may perform what are usually reckoned the most peculiar parts of their office, such as preaching and administering the Lord's-Supper; so great is this Gentleman's fear, lest the distinction should drop between the Clergy and Laity in the Christian Church! That they are the almsmen of the people; such is their dignity! And, as an instance of their usefulness, and even necessity to the world, that tho' there have

been near a *million* of them kept in constant pay for the best part of seventeen hundred years, to teach the world by their precepts, and to reform it by their examples, yet they will not pretend that Religion is plainer, the Scriptures better understood, or that mankind are more wise or virtuous for all their instructions.

His next step was to revile and libel human nature, in his draught of which he copied after good Mr. *Hobbes*, describing all men as knaves in principle and inclination, and virtuous only when they cannot help it, or are under no temptation to be otherwise: this is his Cant in several of the Journals. Then the Government is so unhappy as to fall under his displeasure, which, like a good subject of King *George*, and one that does all he can to expose the unreasonableness of the disaffection and prejudice conceived against him, he represents as engaged in a conspiracy to destroy the Liberties of the Nation; of which good service of his there is no question, the Administration retains a grateful remembrance. After this he flies at lower game, and lays his dreadful paw on the poor Presbyterians, some imagine, with a design to make his peace with the Church, as in the former Journal he broke off from his antient allies the Republicans, to make his court to the Monarchy.

There

There were at *Athens* a sort of refuse people, whom they called *καθαριμαλα* and *περιφημαλα*, as esteeming them good for little else but to be sacrificed and flung into the sea, to reconcile and propitiate the gods to others. The Presbyterians have been often put to a like use. This inclination of our Author to draw upon every one that comes in his way, or rather, like a true knight errant as he is, to ramble out of it in quest of adventures, brings to mind a witty epitaph, that I have met with, on the famous *Aretin*, written in *Italian*, and thus translated into *English*.

*Here lies a man that no man spar'd,
When th' angry fit was on him,
Nor God himself had better far'd,
If Aretin had known him.*

I am, Sir,

Your most humble Servant.

N. B. The Princes of those times were so gauled by *Aretin's* satyrical Writings, that, as the Historian takes notice, he came to be better known by the title of the Scourge of Princes, than under the Name of *Aretin*. He made Kings tributary to him by his Pen, glad that they could so redeem themselves.

It is not impossible but a certain scribler among us may flatter himself with hopes of becoming formidable the same way, and obliging his superiors to purchase peace of him upon his own terms; which he will be never likely to do, as long as there is any difference between ill-nature and wit, and between calumny and truth.





LETTER II.

Of the Origin and Extent of CIVIL POWER.

S I R, Taunton, August 1, 1722.

AMONG our political Writers, two parties have distinguished themselves concerning the Original and Extent of Civil Power, the Popular and the Patriarchal; those who assert all Power to be a gift of the people transferring the Power, which nature had vested severally in them, into some publick hand, to be imployed for the good of the community; and those that derive it from God, by an immediate and positive grant to the first man, from whom it descended to his next heir, and so downward, in a lineal succession, as far as the changeable nature of human things, and the reasons of Providence would permit. There may, possibly, be advantages peculiar to each of these schemes; and whether the patrons of them will own it or no, there are difficulties and objections too that embarrass both: tho' I verily believe, abundantly more, and more shocking, that of the hereditary inde-

feasable right men, than the other. Now if there be any third hypothesis, which, having the main advantages of these two, provides against the ill-consequences of each, it ought certainly to have the preference, by whatsoever hand it happens to be offered. I am mistaken if the following does not bid fair for it. The hypothesis, in short, is this, that all Power is directly from God, not by positive appointment, but, as he is pleased to signify his sovereign Will by the nature of things, leaving it to the choice and discretion of people, among whom Governments are not yet established, in what form, by what persons, and on what conditions, this Power shall be exercised. The Power itself flows from the Will of the Creator, declared with that plainness and evidence, that no part of mankind can be ignorant of it. The least reflection discovers it.

And here before I pass any further, I must desire my Reader to look back to the distinction just mentioned between a *Positive Appointment of God*, and the *Will of God as signified by the nature of things*; because a little explanation of this distinction may be of use to let him more fully into my meaning. A Positive Appointment of God is the same as the Will of God, respecting the conduct or duty of his creatures, in some particular instance, made known to them not immediately by the light of their own Reason,

Reason, but by a supervening Revelation, like that we Christians believe to be contained in the Books of the Old and New Testament. Every Injunction or Command of these Sacred Writings about which human Reason is silent, or which we should not have come to the knowledge of but in this supernatural way, is a Positive Appointment, and, properly speaking, nothing else.

By the nature of things I understand the frame and constitution of man, his body and his mind, and of the world about him, the various relations and circumstances in which men are capable of being placed, together with the tendencies and effects of human actions in this variety of relations, both with regard to the agent himself, and to others. Whatever moral conclusion or rules of practice can be gathered from an accurate survey of these things, the nature of things may properly be said to signify or discover, and are as truly *Divine Laws*, as if they were in so many words and syllables to be found in some written Revelation. Why are the Doctrines and Laws that compose such a Revelation looked on as divine, or from God, but because God is the Author of that Revelation? Now that God is the Author of Nature, (or, which is the same, that all things receive their existence and powers from God, and are by him directed and over-ruled in all the events which they

give birth to in the course of time) is not less evident than it can be ever made concerning any Revelation, that God is the author of it. And must not the Author of Nature be the Author of those practical propositions that result from a contemplation of Nature, in the same propriety of sense as the Author of a Revelation is the Author of all the truths which that Revelation delivers? It matters not what the signs are which the Supreme Being chuses for the indications of his pleasure, whether words or things. Have these signs one plain and determinate meaning? If so, the divine Will is equally manifest in either case. Whoever takes the force of this way of arguing, will without further trouble perceive the reason of assigning a Divine Original to Civil Power; provided by the nature of things, that is of mankind, and of human Society, we are sufficiently instructed in the degree of Power which it is fit the Heads of Society should be trusted with; which is the thing I undertake to shew.

Nothing is more easy than to assign the rate or measure of that Power which in a state of nature every man is possessed of. It is exactly so much, and no more, as every man finds necessary to his own preservation and happiness, consistently with the preservation and happiness of the rest of the species. He that gave me Being did, together with that, confer a right, not only of defending,

fending, but adorning, enriching, and accommodating that Being; God cannot but design, and be well pleased with the safety and perfection of his own work. This, which, in a larger sense, may be stiled self-preservation, is plainly a natural right. But then as I and all other men had the same Author of existence, I cannot be supposed to have any right, but every other man must have the same; and consequently the preservation and well-being, not of this or that, but of every man, is the end proposed by their common Maker and Lord. From whence the next inference is, That no particular person may pursue his private interest, but in such ways, and by such actions as are reconcileable with the general good of mankind. The reason is, that in any other way, and by any other actions, he must contradict the intention of his Maker; which, undoubtedly, no one can have a right to do. This alone overturns Mr. *Hobbes's* imaginary state of nature, in which every man hath a right to every thing; the most absurd and self-repugnant notion that ever politician started, and which the parent of it would have stifled in the birth as a monstrous conception, if he had known in what to found that lawless dominion, with which he was resolved to compliment his *Leviathan*, but in a like boundless and exorbitant right of nature.

From a state of nature, let us pass into Civil Society, and apply what hath been said of the one to the illustration of the other. It being first proved, or granted, to be the Will of the Supreme Being, that mankind should incorporate themselves into Bodies Politick (with the same evidence that self-preservation, as before explained, appears to be the original right of every individual) it follows, that every distinct Society or Body Politick hath full Power and Authority to make use of all those methods which carry in them a likelihood of promoting its welfare, without any injury thereby offered to other Societies; all independent Societies having the same right to subsist and flourish that any one can have: which they can no otherwise do, than by fixing upon such measures as are at least inoffensive to all, though advantageous, it may be, but to one or two. The man who is his own judge (as every one is, that is subject to no other laws but those of nature) reasons thus with himself. “ On the fairest
 “ examination of the matter, I do not ap-
 “ prehend how I shall secure myself but by
 “ doing this or that; I therefore conclude
 “ myself to have the permission, and even
 “ command, of God to do it.” In like manner they, to whom the conduct of a Society is committed, may argue the justice of any Laws, or Resolves, from their subserviency to the preservation and support of that Society.

ety. The Will of God is as manifest in this latter case, as in the former, or rather more so, in that the welfare of a Society is of vastly greater importance than the fate of a single man can be.

I hope by this time the Reader is fully apprized of my notion, and sees wherein it is distinguished from the two before mentioned; from the popular one it differs, in asserting God to be the immediate Donor or Fountain of Civil Power; and both from that and the Patriarchal, in this, that, when searching after the Will of God, it does not run back to the original, or any former state of things, but only considers in what way the general good is best promoted, and by this one consideration cuts off all other inquiries. If I have said any thing of the state of nature, it was not in order to deduce Civil Power from thence, but only by way of illustration and comparison, and to shew that the preservation and happiness of a Political Body is the sole foundation of Political Power, just as the power of the individual, out of Society, is founded in the law of self-preservation.

Here then we have a decisive rule, here we may fix our foot; Civil Power, wherever lodged, is *Jure Divino*, and extends to the doing every thing which the good of the State requires, and no further. If the Magistrate advance but a step beyond this, the ground

ground fails him, and he hath no foundation left to support his authority. The following are some of the considerations that recommend the hypothesis now laid down.

The manner of deriving Power from this original is intelligible to all, even those of the meanest capacities. All must acknowledge it agreeable to Reason, that considering the present constitution of human nature, and circumstances of human life, men should unite together in Societies, if not existing in such Combinations before; and that, these Societies once formed, the governing part of them should have all that Power that can be desired for the right ordering the affairs of the Commonwealth, and answering the great ends of Government: this all can see to be highly agreeable to Reason; nor need they further be told, that what is agreeable to Reason, is agreeable to the Will of God. Reason is the only universal interpreter of the Divine Will; whatever that speaks to mankind, it speaks in his name, who is the great Author and Fountain of Reason.

To the inquiry—Who gave the Magistrate his Power? The answer then is easy—That whatever makes the Magistrate, whether Election or Inheritance, God gives him his Power. Every one can understand this, who is capable of understanding plain Reason; whereas the pretended donation to *Adam* first, and afterwards to *Noah* and his Heirs, is liable

ble to a thousand disputes, which are likely to have no end but with the world: and for the other way of tracing Civil Power, to the Power every man hath in a state of nature, it is more round about than this, and, by that means, less obvious to common view. If, for the satisfaction of a plain countryman, that questioned any Power his Governours had to enact certain Laws under such and such Penalties, you should observe to him, That it is no other than what he and the other members of the Society had stripped themselves of, to make a Present of it to the Magistrate, he would hardly comprehend your meaning: but now, tell him, that the Publick Good renders it necessary, of which, in many cases, his Superiours are the best Judges, and he presently perceives what you would be at, and is sooner convinced that you talk Reason.

I am sensible that in our enlightened Age, and among many of my fellow subjects, such a supposition as this—That their Governors standing upon higher ground than they, may sometimes see further—is hardly to be made. They scorn an implicit faith, and will not allow any thing to be well done of which they do not clearly discern the reason. The truth is, we are become a Nation of Politicians; every three half-penny author, or Coffee-house orator, is fit to be of the Privy-Council, and, if he were advised with, would quickly

quickly fet matters upon a better foot. *Cineas*, in his account of the *Roman* Senate, tells his Master *Pyrrhus*, that it looked like an Assembly of Kings. Should a stranger come into many of our Coffee-houses, and observe with what a solemn air and magisterial tone the company criticize the Publick Administration, what could he imagine but that every board was filled with Statesmen, impatient to display their fine talents in the service of the publick, and retrieve dying Liberty? I heartily congratulate my Country on this increase of wise heads; however, would recommend to their consideration the following ingenious fable. The fable I borrow from *de la Motte*, the moral of it is new.

A ship, loaden with a whole People of Apes, was just come into Port, a sort of commodity for which there was a very great demand. Our Baboon Merchants were gone into the City to advertise what they had to sell, the men making merry ashore, and none but the Apes left behind in the ship. Their Dean, a person of uncommon sufficiency, rising slow, speaks to this effect — “ Com-
 “ rades, *saieth he*, I have a thought in my
 “ head, which may be for the general good;
 “ what if we took this opportunity to make
 “ our escape out of slavery? The occasion is
 “ inviting, by all means let us improve it.
 “ You have been eye-witnesses to the manner
 “ of governing the winds and waves; let
 “ our

“ our first essay be this master-piece of art,
 “ I will be the pilot, and you shall be the
 “ Mariners.” “ A lucky contrivance! *cry'd*
 “ *the whole Assembly*, let us about it imme-
 “ diately. Liberty! Liberty!” In the instant
 you might have seen the ship under sail, and
 scudding along before the wind; it was plea-
 sant enough to observe the busy croud run-
 ning from yard to yard, and climbing up the
 masts; while the old Ape, placing himself
 at the helm, affected the grimace of a
 thoughtful Pilot. By his gravity you would
 have taken him for another *Cato*: “ Mes-
 “ sieurs, *saitb he*, there's a storm coming,
 “ the clouds yonder hang low, and the face
 “ of the deep looks black and frowning; I
 “ doubt we shall have but an ill time on't,
 “ however do not be discouraged.” He was
 right enough as to the storm, but for what
 he hinted of his art, it was a different case.
 In a moment the winds let loose their rage,
 and the thunders ratling about their ears, put
 the poor crew in a terrible fright to think
 there was but a finger's breadth or two be-
 tween them and death. Yet, what they had
 formerly seen the seamen do in a like distress,
 they attempted to imitate; but shewed them-
 selves to be errant bunglers at the trade.
 Should the sails be lowered; they do the
 quite contrary; instead of avoiding the rocks,
 they run directly upon them. To what pur-
 pose is all their blind industry? The vessel
 strikes,

strikes, breaks to pieces before their eyes, and the whole colony of simpletons sinks at once in the abyfs.

You Apes of Politicians! See here what the fate of the ship would be, if left to your management! The first storm that happened, there would be an end of your Art and You.





LETTER III.

Of the Origin and Extent of CIVIL POWER.

THAT Political Power is from God, in opposition to those who suppose it to be a gift of the People; and that it is from him, not by way of positive donation to the first man from whom it is transmitted in the manner of an inheritance to his posterity, but as declaring his Will by the nature of things, so that the Publick Good is the rule by which we are to judge of the Divine Will and of Civil Power; hath been shewn in a former Paper. I then proposed to offer some considerations in favour of this opinion. One of which I have mentioned already. I shall now add some others.

In what way Civil Polities had their rise, is a question of fact, not more obscure than needless upon the present hypothesis. For, however decided, or if not decided at all, it makes no odds in this case. Let those that have leisure and inclination continue to

dispute — Whether men were ever in a state of nature, and by common consultation and agreement exchanged that for a Political State; or Magistracy rose insensibly out of Paternal Dominion, following the order of Primogeniture, so that mankind were always born under Government — Let them, I say, dispute whether either, or both of these, or any other way, ought to be pitched on for the first formation of Societies; and after all, let them agree or differ upon the point, it is certain and demonstrable, that every Society hath a right to preserve itself, and so much Power inherent in it as serves to this end, and no more. Which leads me to another observation.

That the bounds of Sovereign Power, and the submission to be paid to it, are better ascertained and marked out by the help of this than of either of the other schemes. Supposing, for argument's sake, such a grant to the first Parent of mankind as some contend for, it was either unlimited, or restrained. If the Power bestowed was unlimited, it lies upon them who say so, to prove their assertion; and to prove it too by the most convincing arguments; since mankind are too tenacious of their Liberties to surrender them up without being compelled to it either by external force, or irresistible reasons. Now, for any such reasons, I despair of ever seeing them,

them, and they must be violently attached to an opinion, who fancy, that any, yet produced, are of this kind. If the grant had any restrictions added to it, we must beg their assistance in discovering what they are, since they have too much contempt for our Sovereign Lords the People, to give us leave to estimate the Supreme Power by what is beneficial for them.

The Power accompanying the supposed state of nature cannot be a just standard of the Civil Power, for this reason, that it is notorious, these two have not always the same limits, but are each of them, in different instances, more extensive than the other; which proceeds from hence, that to the preservation of a Society more Power is sometimes necessary than to the preservation of the individual, at other times less. Out of Society, the severest punishment of a small injury may, in some circumstances, be justifiable, because necessary to prevent a greater; while, in Society, where sufficient caution may be taken without going to such extremities, the same may be unreasonable. Here the Power of the individual exceeds that of the Society. But, in most cases, it is the reverse of this, and the authority of Civil Governments reaches to many things not within the compass of a private Power. That man would usurp a Power that did not belong to him, who, in a state of disunion and

independance, should take upon him to punish Drunkenness, idle and riotous Living, Swearing, Gaming, Whoredom between persons at their own disposal, &c. all which, notwithstanding, have been punished by the Laws of several States, and that justly too, because of the ill influence these, and such like vices, have upon the peace and good order of Society. And as in some cases, vices, not punishable in a state of nature, may be cognizable in Society, so in others the penalty may be aggravated and enlarged.

It would be hard to prove that, in a state of nature, the Children may be made to suffer in any degree or respect, that is avoidable, for the misbehaviour of their Parents; and yet we know this is practised in many parts of the world, where, for Treason, the Children of the Delinquent are deprived of their inheritance, and have sometimes been declared incapable of all future honours. It is enough to warrant any such Penalties, if it can be shewn that the Publick Good renders them expedient. Pursue the same principle, and you will be obliged to own that the Supreme Power can never be absolute, or of such a nature that, however exerted, though to the destruction of the lives and properties of the Subject, the Subject hath no other remedy permitted him but patience. Civil Power is unavoidably confined within certain bounds; it cannot rise above its fountain,

tain, the general good. So that, unless it could be made to appear, that it is more for the benefit of States and Kingdoms to be under Despotick Rule, than to have a Liberty, in extreme cases, of appealing to force, such an appeal, in such cases; must be allowed them, or, without being allowed will very warrantably be taken. Now, if they please, we will venture it upon this issue, and according as after a just comparison from history and experience, we find free men or slaves to be in the happier condition, will decide in favour of Resistance or Non-Resistance. A regard to one's Country ought to be superiour to all private and particular obligations; from this must flow the respect and obedience due to Princes themselves; for upon supposition Societies might do better without Government than with it, this subordination among mankind, of many to a few, ought, as soon as possible, to be abolished.

This observation may satisfy all but those who are resolved not to be satisfied, that *Passive Obedience*, in all cases whatsoever, is very unlikely to be a doctrine belonging to Revelation; so very unlikely, that it ought not to be received for such, unless frequently delivered, in the most express terms, and those too not capable of any other reasonable construction. Revealed Religion is built upon Natural; no wise and considerate man there-

fore will be in haste to give the character of *Divine* to any doctrine that inverts the order of natural duties, as this of Absolute Power manifestly does, subjecting the greater to the less, the whole to an inconsiderable part, the end to the means. The Prince is but one of many thousands or millions, his pleasure of small moment, in comparison of the interest of the Commonwealth, and his Authority designed only as a means of securing the general tranquility. All that *Christianity* does, is to enforce the obligations which, by virtue of the relations they stand in to each other, men were before under. Yet (which ought to be carefully remarked) Authority and Submission are not such exact tallies to one another, but that where the Sovereign goes beyond the bounds of his Authority, the Subject may be obliged to follow him with his Submission; the common good being the invariable rule to both.

It is not every supposed or even real grievance that will justify Faction and Mutiny, much less change Rebellion into lawful Resistance. If the ground of complaint be a misfortune rather than a fault, arising from an unusual complication of causes, and the contingency of human affairs, this want of foresight may well be forgiven to any Administration; nor should that charity be denied to the Trustees of the Commonwealth, which every

every private man, that means well and is unfortunate, may challenge. Where the error is less excusable, yet not obstinately defended or repeated, it should be generously forgotten. Yea, though the mismanagements are more numerous, of wider extent, and more pernicious influence, still, if they are not in essential points, if they are sufferable, if having recourse to violent remedies will endanger the life of the State more than leaving it to time and the constitution to repel the venom of the disease, it cannot be made a controversy what every man should, and what every honest man will esteem his duty in this situation. Further,

This accounts for those extraordinary steps which a Government is sometimes necessitated to take in compliance with sudden emergencies, which could not be foreseen, or not so well guarded against. It is not indeed fit that certain cases should be put by way of supposition beforehand, because it is to be hoped they will never happen, or when they do, they will sufficiently explain themselves. The Constitution is a sacred thing: Agreed; and therefore; say you, not to be deviated from in the minutest particular; rather, say I, ought to be made free with in some junctures by those that have a love for it, and would save it from ruin, or from the evident danger of it. Our veneration ought not to

be for names but things. It is not in the choice of any Society, or the Legislators and Representatives of it, so to tie up their hands by any Acts and Settlements of their own, that it shall be for ever after unlawful to break through them for the sake of the publick safety. *Salus Populi suprema Lex esto.* This is a Divine Law, by which all other, merely human, Laws are to be controlled, qualified, or interpreted.

The *Athenians*, on a certain time, lodged a thousand talents in the Citadel, making it criminal to propose or order the imploying this money on any other occasion but the repelling of an hostile fleet, that should attempt a descent upon their coasts; which notwithstanding, they themselves, alarmed at the revolt of the inhabitants of *Chios*, did not scruple to revoke this Decree. And does any one imagine they were herein to blame? But then the necessity of the case ought to be very apparent, that there may be no handle given for drawing what is done into precedent, when there is no such necessity; a thing of the most dangerous consequence. Such a necessity, I should think, all the well-wishers to the present happy Establishment, and the Liberties of their Country, must acknowledge to have been for the *Septennial Act*. The continuance of it unrepealed, whether adviseable or not, I meddle not with, but
leave

leave it to the wisdom of the present Parliament, when it shall fit, to determine the matter; not precluding others, that are better able, from giving their opinion, which they may do and welcome, provided their zeal or confidence of being in the right, does not make them forget their duty.

There was a Law among the antient *Britons*, that no one should speak of the Common-wealth, and of publick affairs but in Council or Parliament; this was certainly carrying the matter too far. Every man ought to have the privilege of a freeborn Subject, to speak his mind, not forgetting, however, that he ought not to obtrude his advice upon those that do not want it, and should keep within the bounds of decency; in which, I must needs say, many of our modern Dealers in Politicks, and particularly some of the *Journalists*, seem to me to have been shamefully wanting; who, if one were to guess at the quality of the men by that of their Writings, must be deemed to be of the lowest of the People, and as great strangers to good breeding, as all of them are to good temper, and some of them to good sense. To add no more.

The character of the Magistrate is more strongly fenced, and guarded by this notion, than by the popular one. His Authority is more visibly divine, his Person more venerable,

ble, and the Conscience of the Subject held under greater awe. His Subjects may nominate him, and they do no more; heaven delivers the ensigns of Power and Sword of Justice, into his hand, and clothes him with Imperial Dignity. When men are taught to look not only upon the Magistrate, but upon Magistracy as their Creature, and to believe that their Princes and Rulers have no Power but what they have graciously given them, the more unthinking sort will be apt, upon the least resentment, to treat them with very little ceremony; like those wise people, that first make their Gods, and then, if they are sullen, and will not gratify them in every request, from prayers fall to menaces, and from menaces to rougher methods, in hopes they shall either beat or fright them into a better humour. So we are told the Votaries of a certain Saint did lately; whom, because it happened to rain at the time they were carrying him in Procession, to procure dry weather, they very civilly threw him into the river. The guilt of Rebellion, will, by such, be thought to amount to no more than a breach of promise. The Scripture style, according to which the Magistrate *is the Minister of God for good*, does much more clearly point out the ground of those duties which Scripture and Reason do jointly command; such as not speaking evil of Dignities, obey-
ing

ing Magistrates, being subject to the Higher Powers, not only for Wrath, but Conscience-sake; because *the Powers that be, are ordained of God; and whosoever resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God, and shall receive to himself damnation.*





LETTER IV.

A Defence of the LIBERTY of the WILL.

S I R,

THE Author of the *British Journal* will, I hope, forgive me, when I declare myself to have had so little curiosity to know the subject of his Papers, that, to this moment, I should hardly have looked into them, if, by accident, I had not understood that, instead of *Cato* with his Politicks, *Dio-genes* had of late been reading Lectures of Philosophy from his Tub, and instructing the Publick in a point, about which, if his notion be right, it were much better for mankind to continue ignorant and mistaken. That man is a mere machine, and all his actions, good and bad, wise and foolish, fatally determined, I always thought a most extravagant assertion, and should have been surprized to hear it from any but men who have been too long at war with common sense, to leave us room to wonder at any contradiction or absurdity, however gross, which they shall think fit to espouse.

The

The first reflection this occasioned was on the odd jumble which the ideas of Political Liberty and Moral Necessity make in the heads and writings of these men. Freedom is a most glorious thing in the Commonwealth, the natural right of mankind, who cannot be too jealous of it, nor go too far in securing it; in human actions Freedom is a chimera, an impossibility: but, if this be truth, why so angry with those above you for not managing affairs to your liking, since they themselves are as very slaves as you can be, and all their motions, like those of other parcels of matter, are according to the force impressed, and in the same direction? In truth, following this scheme of things, the parallel is but too obvious between Almighty God and the Master of a Puppet-Show. This latter, from the despotick power he hath over his little people, makes them agree or differ, act now one part, immediately after a quite contrary, just as he pleases. For example, we will suppose him to entertain his customers with the representation of a Government distressed by factions and popular discontents. The sage Monarch sustains his character so well, as to merit the title of the Father of his Country; his Ministers are wakeful for the Publick Good, and equal to their respective posts, notwithstanding which, whispers are spread among the crowd of they know not what imaginary griev-

grievances; the *T—s*, the *H—s* and the whole tribe of Demagogues fill up the cry of Male-Administration; and at the same time that they are thus opening against the State, some from among themselves start up, and very wisely observe that they are all, from the King to the Cobler, but a company of wooden heads pulled this way or that, at the discretion of the man behind the curtain: however, that it is even beyond the patience of a piece of timber to bear such insults and provocations as they have met with. Tell me now, wherein the affairs of mankind, their Wars, their Treaties and Negotiations, their Intrigues and Conspiracies differ, as to the main, from this ludicrous and fantastick scene: and what we must think of that Being, who, for his diversion, brings us on the stage, and idly plays us one against the other.

I next considered with myself what valuable end our Tub-Philosopher could propose in writing after this manner, and whence his zeal for such an ill-favoured doctrine. It must certainly be of the last importance to mankind, a useful discovery, and adapted to serve the interests of Religion and Virtue. And, if this be the case, it is pity it should remain a secret. But, that we may not be too credulous, let us make a little trial of it. Here is a man strongly tempted to play the knave; but, believing himself master of
his

his own actions, and answerable for them, he is secretly restrained thro' shame of the foulness of the crime, or fear of its consequences, in an after-life. Whether he be free, or no, matters not. He imagines that he is free; and shall deserve blame and punishment, if he does any thing injurious to his fellow-creatures, or dishonourable to his Maker; and by this thought he is awed, and kept within some bounds. This is Conscience; a persuasion of the natural and intrinsic differences of good and evil, and of our own liberty to chuse one or the other: which inward persuasion fills the mind with joy or sorrow, hope or fear, confidence or shame, according as we apprehend ourselves to have made a right or a wrong use of our freedom in observing or neglecting these essential and everlasting differences of things.

Let us now put the supposition, the other way, of a person in the same circumstances as the former, but not under the same restraint. Is he hired to write a Libel, or commit a Murder? He esteems himself as, properly, no more chargeable with these actions than the Pen or the Sword he employs in them. He directs these, while he himself is directed by a higher hand. He is but the *Amanuensis* or executioner of Fate. As long as he hath this view of the case, what is there left to be a check upon his inclinations? What room for Conscience to terrify

or reproach him? With this apology at hand, will he not readily follow appetite and passion, where it can be done with safety, and execute whatever a present interest shall dictate? *Cato* had described mankind as a race of low, selfish and mischievous beings, void of all principles of Conscience or Honour. After him comes *Diogenes*, and gravely tells them that a knave can no more help being what he is, than a fool; the expression of *a natural rogue* being altogether as proper as of *a natural fool*, tho' not quite so common. And is not Society extremely obliged to this class of Writers, and in a likely way to flourish upon their principles?

But, that the Letter-Writer may not think I am begging quarter for an opinion which I despair of defending, I shall now proceed to give him one reason, among many, why I believe man to be a free agent, and possessed of a self-determining power. He himself allows of a supreme and self-existent Being, perfectly just, and wise, and good, the Maker and Governour of the world. Now upon this single concession I undertake to demonstrate the liberty of human actions. That mankind act irregularly in a thousand instances, or so as to violate the Laws of Reason, Religion, and the Civil Society, is a matter of fact, not to be disputed; the only question is—Whether they can avoid acting thus? Grant me that they can, and I have

have gained my point, since they will then do what they have a power to forbear. Deny it, and you are obliged to hold that the first Cause is the source or origin of all evil, *i. e.* that sin and folly are the necessary productions of infinite goodness and wisdom ; which is a manifest contradiction.

“ The whole system of the universe (says
 “ this Writer) is the care of God, and all
 “ other inferior beings must be subordinate
 “ to the interest of this great one, and all
 “ contribute in their several stations and
 “ actions to bring about at last the grand
 “ purposes of his Providence.” But will he
 pretend to say that Lying, Fraud, Intemperance, Inhumanity, Oppression, and the like practices, have in their nature a tendency to promote the good of intelligent beings ; and cannot therefore in the order of causes be dispensed with by him who guides the whole design ? This were to make these things good, and not evil. Or will any one contend that particular Societies, and consequently the general system which comprehends them all, would not enjoy more harmony and peace, if they that compose them were universally just, temperate, grateful, kind, and beneficent ? And why then are they not all these, but too often the direct contrary ? The common answer, that man being at present in a state of trial for the happiness of a future life, is therefore left to

his liberty to do good or evil, is a plain and rational solution of the difficulty; whereas the opinion that men are inevitably betrayed into all these mischiefs by a concatenation of causes, overthrows at once the idea of an Eternal Mind and of Moral Perfections, establishing in their stead a blind unintelligent Matter as the original of all things.

Did we see a regularity and consistency in the actions of rational creatures, were they all uniformly virtuous, conducted by Reason, and leveled at one certain end, the common interest and welfare of the whole, there might be then some little colour for doubt, whether they were not under a *necessity*, like that which retains the heavenly bodies in their several courses, which they perform with an amazing order and constancy, one age after another. But, for certain, wisdom cannot be the spring of an unequal, freakish and contradictory conduct; the fountain of all good can never necessitate his creatures to do evil. Nor must you think to escape by saying, that God himself is a necessary agent, that he could not but create man with an invincible bias to transgress his laws, and cannot but punish him for transgressing them, tho' without any fault of his. For whence should this *necessity* arise? Not from any thing without him, because he would not then be the first and independent Being; not from his own nature, which, containing in itself the
 most

most perfect wisdom, justice, and goodness, cannot, without the most evident absurdity, be supposed to force him to act in direct opposition to all these Perfections. “Almighty
 “God, in compassion to mankind, hath annexed Rewards and Punishments to the
 “observance or non-observance of his Laws.” Here let me ask, Whether he hath done this with a design they should be sufficient to operate upon all, or on those only whom they actually influence? If on all, they are all free; if only on some, they for whom they were never intended can have no concern in them. Who then are the persons to be punished?

I shall conclude with observing that there is such a natural conviction in the minds of men of this truth, that *Epicurus* himself, tho’ by his principles obliged to deny the Freedom of the Will, was not yet hardy enough to do it, but in order to reconcile it with his Law of Gravity, invented a Motion of Declination for his Atoms; which, if allowed him, hath just as much to do with Liberty, as the idea of a Triangle with a good Dinner: I am,

S I R,

Your Obliged Humble Servant.



L E T T E R V.

On the IMMORTALITY of the SOUL.

THERE are persons so unhappily formed, as to be at the same time extremely sceptical and the most credulous of mankind. Their pretence for not believing some things, is, that they cannot comprehend them; and yet they can, without difficulty, swallow others that are a thousand times more incomprehensible than those they reject: they laugh at *mysteries* in Religion, and would think it a reproach to their understandings to submit to them; but in what favours their corrupt passions and designs, their preconceived opinions and irregular inclinations, *mysteriousness* is so far from an objection, that contradiction to the common notions of mens minds is none; and they will believe not only without evidence, but even in defiance of it. As for instance, that the human Soul is a system of Matter, and that all its thoughts, volitions, reasonings, doubts and fears, result from the action and reaction of the particles of this system. Our *British Diogenes* is among those,

those, who, as if confederated in a design against the Soul of man, labour hard to degrade it from its dignity to a level with the clay it animates; and, when made by God in his own image, and but a little lower than the angels, would fain argue it into a likeness to stocks and stones, the deities worshipped by the heathens. Vain attempt! Conscious to her superiour nature, the Soul mocks their feeble efforts, and dares meet their keenest arguments with as little fear as an angel would discover in the midst of a battle.

*The Soul, secur'd in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.*

But, in truth, it is too great a compliment to the objections of these men, to resemble them to such weapons, when they have neither point nor edge in them, and are more like arrows with leaden heads, and thrown by a weak hand, that either reach not home, or strike with a dead sound against the shield, and then fall off without doing the least execution. If any thing could tempt me to doubt of the Soul's Immortality, the confusion and incoherence of this Writer's reasonings would much sooner do it than the strength of them, there being in the former of these something very like what we might expect from the fortuitous collision of blind

and wandering atoms. His Discourse, I own, bids as fair to be the work of *Chance* as most I have seen; however having in it some glimmerings of Reason, and faint traces of thought and meaning, I am convinced that it must have proceeded from a nobler cause.

Our *Cynick* tells his Coffee-house Readers, to their great edification, that Matter thinks; that is, is capable of various sensations and reflections. But if he can suffer a civil question, I would ask him, By what is this operation of Thinking produced? He will not say by a difference of magnitude; since the smallest particles are of the same nature, and have the same common properties with the greatest, as is plain from this single consideration, that the greatest are made up of the smallest: for upon dividing a greater and a smaller mass into equal parts, the greater will appear to have more such parts than the smaller, and this is all that will follow. Is it by a difference of figure? Not so neither. For figure is nothing else but a certain relation of the parts of Matter one to the other; so that if Thinking consists in figure (or, if you will, organization, which is no other than a proper configuration and structure of the constituent parts of bodies) it will be nothing absolute, but a mere external denomination. Whether a quantity of Matter exists under a spherical, a cubical, or any other surface, the difference will be
of

of just the same kind as that which arises from the various artful figures of a Dance, or the several ways of drawing up an Army; in the two latter of which cases the persons are manifestly the very same, neither wiser, nor stronger, nor more virtuous, as the Matter must needs be in the first; nothing new emerges from ever so many shiftings and changes of this sort.

Shall we then have recourse to Motion for the performance of these wonderful feats, no less strange than Transubstantiation, and of the same size of possibility? This seems to be what *Cato's* Second is most inclined to.

“ When the Actions of exterior bodies strike
 “ upon the organs of sense, they must cause
 “ a second Action or Motion, and continue
 “ it *in Infinitum*, unless it meets obstruction.
 “ This first Action causes Sensation, and the
 “ second Reflection, &c. Again, this Action
 “ is called by different names, as it affects
 “ the different parts of the machine: when it
 “ affects the eye, it is called seeing, the ear
 “ hearing, the palate tasting, the nose smelling;
 “ but when the motion is continued further,
 “ and gets to the brain, or other internal
 “ part of the system, it causes that effect
 “ which we call Thinking.” All this I shall
 acknowledge to be very intelligible, when
 I can conceive that a set of organ pipes
 are ravished with their own musick, a painting
 room is agreeably entertained with the fine
 pieces hung up in it, or that a pin-cushion

feels most tormenting pains upon its being stuck full of pins.

I shall not stop to take notice of some peculiar elegancies, in our Author's style, as, *an action striking, i. e.* an action acting; *the sensation of vegetables*, and the like; but shall immediately proceed to examine what we can extract from the idea of Motion. The capacity of being moved, which is all that Matter can challenge, is a passive quality, and proceeds from a defect of Being and Power. A body is therefore moveable, because it is of a limited extension; that is, does not at once possess all space, nor, containing only a finite quantity of Matter, can make infinite resistance; upon which account it must yield to a force sufficient to overcome its resistance, and be thrust out of one place into another: consequently, the less the quantity of Matter in any body, *cæteris paribus*, the more easily is that body moved, because less capable of standing against the impulse of other bodies. And what similitude can we trace in all this to Thinking, which is an active principle, the highest excellency and perfection, and that from whence all the Moral Attributes of the Deity derive their original? The Deity, being immense, is immoveable; but not incogitative. In God, therefore, Cogitation is neither Motion, nor the effect of Motion; and is it not evident, that Cogitation, Perception, or Consciousness, must be of the same

same general nature, in whatever Being it is found? For certain, it is not Motion in one Being, and in another something which hath not the least affinity to Motion.

It is further undeniable, that the Motion of bodies is only a successive application of their parts to different parts of space; which parts of space being perfectly uniform and alike, all the possibilities of Motion can never occasion the least alteration in the absolute natures and properties of things. Let a system of Matter be carried in any direction, and with any degree of velocity, its parts continuing relatively at rest, every body apprehends that it will acquire nothing by the career. Nor is the case a whit mended by changing the supposition, and imagining the parts in Motion among themselves; for here every distinct particle must be considered as a whole, and the very same observation will hold concerning the parts that was before made of the whole collection: they will remain unalterably the same; and tho' the whole may seem to pass under a change, yet that change is, in reality, no more than a different juxtaposition of the parts. Besides which, we might venture to appeal to every one who attends to the operations of his mind, when he desires, deliberates, resolves, feels pleasure or pain, whether this inward consciousness or knowledge have any thing in it agreeing with the translation

lation of a body, or of a single particle, from place to place, which is all that is meant by Motion. He that sees any great resemblance between these things, or does not see a wide difference between them, must have a much quicker or duller apprehension than is common to mankind.

But may not Motion be the cause of Thought? The occasional cause of divers modes of Thinking, I grant it may be; but not the proper cause of Thought itself, till colour is known to produce sound, and things entirely dissimilar shall naturally give birth to one another. The usual subterfuge of the Materialist, when driven from this hold, is, that we do not know all the hidden powers of Matter, nor the qualities that may spring from the endless combinations of which Matter is capable. I hope I shall never be backward to confess my ignorance both of Nature, and the God of it; yet I take leave to say, that Thinking cannot be a power belonging to Matter, unless it belongs to it originally and universally, *i. e.* unless it be an essential power: my reason is, that by all the transformations of bodies and shufflings of atoms, it is demonstrable, not a single power of an absolute and generical nature is superadded to the material mass. There is, it is true, an unexhausted variety of figures, magnitudes, and motions, and, by means of these, of mechanical operations and effects: but, in regard

regard all these are only so modes of the original attributes, or positions of bodies, or the parts of bodies with respect to each other; here is nothing answering to Thought, which is not a mere relation of things, or mode of some more extensive quality, but an inherent and primary attribute.

The sum is, Matter is immutably and eternally the same, of which I desire no better illustration than what *Diogenes* himself supplies me with, though brought by him to a quite contrary purpose. “Two Dice afford
“ six times as many chances as one, and three
“ as two.” Very true, but let the number of chances keep increasing to infinity, the Dice continue as they were, and so likewise the Spots they are marked with, which soever of them happen to turn upwards. So, notwithstanding an incredible number of Words may be formed out of four and twenty Letters, the Letters gain nothing at all by it; nor have these Letters or Words more sense and thought in one situation than in any other: Institution and Custom have indeed arbitrarily made them the signs of our thoughts. And, which deserves to be remarked, what Institution is in regard to Words, the Laws of Union, established by the Creator, are in reference to Sensations; there being in the nature and reason of things no more discoverable connection between the actions of the
parti-

particles of Matter, variously figured and moved, upon the organs of sense, and the perceptions consequent on these actions, than between the sounds and figures of Words, and the meaning which mankind are agreed they shall convey. And where now is the ridiculousness of using the word *Spirit*, tho' we have no clear and positive idea of Immaterial Substance? Not to take notice that we have as clear an idea of *Spirit* as of *Body*, neither of which is knowable but by its properties, it is enough that we can prove Thinking to be no Property of Matter; from whence it necessarily follows, that the Thinking Principle is Immaterial. When it is said of God, *that he is a Spirit*, can the meaning be any other than that he is a pure incorporeal Mind? And if there be one Immaterial Being in the universe, there can be nothing contradictory or ridiculous in the supposition of more. It is, on the contrary, most natural to conceive, that whatever Being resembles God in the faculties of Understanding and Will, is further like him in the Immateriality of his Essence.

The Reader may observe, I have taken it for granted, that Thought is not essential to Matter, and that the Divine Being is Immaterial and Immense; not, I can assure Mr.

Dio-

Diogenes, from any apprehension I have of the difficulty of demonstrating these things, but as charitably supposing he is not yet so forsaken of all Reason as to deny them: when he shall do this, it will be time enough to set about the proof of them.





P O E M S

O N

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.





P O E M S
O N
S E V E R A L O C C A S I O N S .

To Mr. W A T T S,

On his Divine P O E M S .

S A Y, human Seraph, whence that charming force,
That flame, that soul, which animates each line;

And how it runs with such a graceful ease,
Loaded with pond'rous sense ! Say, did not He
The lovely J E S U S, who commands thy breast,
Inspire thee with himself? With J E S U S dwells,
Knit in mysterious bands, the *Paraclete*,
The breath of G O D, the everlasting source
Of Love : And what is Love in souls like thine,
But Air, and Incense to the Poet's fire ?

Should an expiring Saint, whose swimming
eyes

Mingle the images of things about him,
 But hear the least exalted of thy strains,
 How greedily he'd drink the musick in,
 Thinking his heav'nly Convoy waited near!
 So great a stress of powerful harmony,
 Nature unable longer to sustain,
 Would sink oppress'd with joy to endless rest.

Let none henceforth of Providence complain,
 As if the world of spirits lay unknown,
 Fenc'd round with black impenetrable night;
 What tho' no shining angel darts from thence
 With leave to publish things conceal'd from
 sense,

In language bright as theirs, we here are told,
 When life its narrow round of years hath roll'd,
 What 'tis imploys the bless'd, what makes their
 blifs;

Songs such as WATTS's are, and Love like
 his.

But then, dear Sir, be cautious how you use
 To transports so intensely rais'd your Muse,
 Lest, whilst th' ecstatic impulse you obey,
 The soul leap out, and drop the duller clay.

Sept. 4.
 1706.

To Mrs. R O W E,

On her Excellent POEMS.

TEACH me the art, fair regent of the
soul,

To raise the passions, or at will, controul;
That heav'nly art, which can our cares beguile,
Make envy pleas'd, and pensive sorrow smile.

Circe with magick spells the soul could bind,
And change the shape; here the reverse we
find;

The brute, transform'd by you, assumes a
nobler kind.

O had I but thy voice, and skill, and lyre!
Soon would I set the listening Swains on fire.
Virtue's majestick form before their eyes,
Her lovely train, her palace in the skies,
And high refulgent throne, should stand con-
fest,

And with aspiring wishes swell each breast.
The tenants of the grove, a tuneful throng,
Should cease their lays, to hear my sweeter
song;

Thy self too, transports feel, before unknown,
And in *another*, praise what was thine *own*:
Else the too modest Nymph will ne'er believe,
How soft the strains, the joys how vast they
give.

But while th' admiring audience sit around,
 And faint beneath the rapture of the sound,
 Calm and unaw'd she will her self appear,
 And think we flatter what we scarce can bear.

Fond wishes these! To think she would
 impart

Heav'n's inspirations, like the rules of art;
 Or trust to any mean, unskilful hand,
 (The speaking strings that knows not to com-
 mand)

The golden gift, a welcome present made
 By *Gabriel*; who with grace celestial said,
 "Hail, thou of heav'n belov'd! This harp
 is thine

"So often sat to hymns and airs divine;
 "Still let it sacred be to Praise and Love;
 " 'Twill kindle ardors pure as ours above,
 "Assist thy rising soul, and bear her flight
 "Beyond the rolling spheres, to realms of
 endless light:

"Morning and Ev'ning let me meet thee
 there."

No more he spoke—but mix'd unseen with
 air.



A Thought on DEATH.

O *Death!* What pow'r is thine, that
 distant, thus,
 By fancy seen, thou call'st up all our fears,
 And shed'st a baleful influence on the soul!
 Mine hangs her drooping wings, and, down-
 ward press'd
 By foggy damps, attempts in vain to rise;
 For still in ken of an untimely grave,
 The daily subject of the pensive thought,
 She hovers o'er, and views the sad recess.
 If (which is seldom) I converse with joy,
 And nature, lighten'd of her sorrows, smiles,
 While pleasing objects dance before the sight,
 A thought of *Death* comes cross the lovely
 scene,
 And blots it out at once: So have I known
 The rising Sun dart round his golden beams,
 The welcome promise of a glorious Day;
 When, lo, scarce have we felt his vital lamp,
 But strait some sullen cloud hangs threat'ning
 o'er;
 We sicken, the creation seems to mourn,
 And all things wear a deep and heavy gloom.

A HYMN on SIGHT.

I.

I Bless my God for ev'ry sense,
 But most for thee, my darling Sight,
 By whom I learn t' adore the pow'r
 That won this beautiful world from Night.

II.

When thou art not, the glorious scene
 In darkness undistinguish'd lies,
 Heav'n, Earth, and Seas are all in vain,
 Nor can their wonders move surprize.

III.

Ev'n light, of all material things
 Best emblem of the Deity,
 Spreads to the blind unheeded charms;
 For why? 'Twas made alone for thee.

IV.

Thou awful fears, and thoughts sublime,
 Dost to the ravished mind convey,
 Of him, who rais'd this ample Frame,
 And o'er the whole extends his sway.

V.

With pleasure now I travel o'er
 Heav'n's vast extent; amaz'd to see
 Numberless worlds in order roll
 With rapid motion thro' the sky.

VI. Infi-

VI.

Infinite pow'er, and equal skill
In all thy works, O Lord, I view;
Thy breath first kindled up these fires,
And thou their wastes dost still renew.

VII.

The Sun's bright orb thy glory fills,
The nightly Moon reflects the same,
And all the starry globes diffuse,
With their own light, their Maker's name.

VIII.

But ah, how soon my light is lost,
Hopeless to reach the bounds of place!
Yet where that fails, by fancy's aid,
Remoter regions I can trace.

IX.

'Till, got within the verge of Stars,
Earth's little ball escapes my ken;
The more I wonder thy delight,
O God, is with the sons of men!



On the DEATH of a YOUTH.

WITH joy, blest Youth, we saw thee
reach the goal,

Fair was thy frame, and delicate thy soul,
Where, join'd at once, the softest manners met,
Truth, judgment, sweetness, innocence, and
wit;

The *Graces*, and the *Muses*, came combin'd,
Those to adorn thy body, these thy mind:
So form'd, he flew his race, 'twas quickly won,
'Twas but a step, and finish'd when begun:
Nature, her self, surpriz'd, wou'd add no more,
His life compleat in all its parts before;

But his few years, with pleasing wonder, told
By Virtues, not by Days, and thought him old.

So far beyond his Age, those Virtues ran,
That in a Boy, she found him more than Man:

For Years, let wretches importune the skies, }
'Till at the long expence of anguish wise, }
They live to count their Days by miseries. }

Those win the prize, who soonest run the race,
And life burns brightest in the shortest space.

So in the Convex-Glass embody'd run,
Drawn to a point, the glories of the Sun;
At once the gathering beams intensely glow,
And fiercely thro' the straiten'd circle flow,
In one strong flame, conspire the blended rays,
Run to a fire, and croud into a blaze.

To a Young FRIEND.

SHOULD smiling joys on all thy steps
 attend,
 And health, to Monarchs coy, be STRE-
 PHON's friend.

Gay should thy humour be, serene thy brow,
 And, easy as thy thoughts, thy minutes flow:
 Yet more, should *Fame*, adopting thee her
 Son,

With partial hand, thy wildest wishes crown,
 And promise to thy mem'ry late renown:
 While at thy feet, the Earth, and Ocean lay
 Their wealth, and glittering heaps choak up
 thy way.

Say—Would it not disturb thy mirthful
 vein?

O'erturn the foolish *Babel* of thy brain?
 The feeble charm dissolve of human praise,
 And with grim phantoms haunt thy genial
 days?

Should e'er this thought intrude, the Drudge,
 and I,

And ev'ry hapless Wight alike must die:
 They from a weary march, and toilsome strife,
 By Death discharg'd shall cease to suffer life;
 I, what I love, must quit, and when the Sun
 A few times more its shining course hath run,
 Down

Down to the melancholy coasts must go,
Which, nor his Morning beams, nor Ev'ning,
know,

Where musick's soothing voice (tho' Fables
tell,

That ORPHEUS once could charm the shades
of Hell)

And the loud trump of *Fame* are never heard,
The heavy, leaden, gates by silence bar'd :

Silence, which, banish'd to those dre'ry plains,
O'er the wide waste in peaceful terror reigns;

'Tis thither, my unweeting feet, ye tend,
And there, alas, must all life's mock'ry end.

Thence, folded up in sleep, I ne'er shall rise,
'Till the last summons shake the vaulted skies,

And the Earth's dusty chambers, where we
lay,

Catch all on fire, and blaze unnat'ral Day.

Say—Will the world then wear that tempt-
ing face?

Wilt thou then court, as now, its fond em-
brace?

Confess—the pious man alone is wise,

Who loose preserves his heart from earthly
ties;

When life's a Comedy, can wish it done,

Heir to diviner joys above the Sun;

Yet does not as a bare spectator sit,

To laugh at follies, other men commit;

But takes the part of Providence assign'd

And, by a generous aim, to serve mankind,

If great his lot, shews 'tis below his mind.

Regard-

Regardless of the world, he journeys thro',
 To heaven's high arch he lifts his ardent view,
 The narrow, rough, ascent of virtue treads,
 Nor counts that painful, which to glory leads;
 To those bright mansions, those serene abodes,
 Where more than kings, rever'd on earth as
 gods,

The wiser few, whom true ambition fir'd,
 Exalted shine, admiring, and admir'd.
 Thither, his Soul, enlarg'd from fleshy bands,
 Flies joyful; thence the prospect round com-
 mands;
 And at the last, the great, decisive day,
 He, fearless, shall the burning world survey;
 There, safe, in holy peace, with angels sit,
 While vast destruction raves beneath his feet.

PRIDE *and* DISCONTENT *silenced.*

AFTER a fruitless chase, resolved to
 know,
 Whether a world so lov'd, was more than
 show,
 The good, and ill, a fretful mortal laid
 In passion's scales, uncertain, which out-
 weigh'd;
 But quickly found the best of human things,
 Light as the gloss that paints the insect's wings;
 While

While troubles, such a weight, in fancy, have,
As brings down life, with sorrow to the grave.

Of Patience, quite forsook, 'twas here he
cry'd,
No friendly power doth over man preside:
The scatter'd dust, at first without a name,
By chance this mass of wretchedness became;
And chance, with folly, shares the helpless
prey,
'Till kinder death comes in, and sweeps him
quite away.

As these last words, with fault'ring tongue
he spoke,
Earth trembled, and his soul with horror
shook,
All heav'n appear'd incens'd, and from the
flame,
A voice, more terrible than thunder, came.
Where is this child of Pride, who to be mine,
Himself denies, fond of an abject line?
Stand forth, ingrate; if thou hast strength
to stand,
When not upheld by my almighty hand.
Dare puny atoms, heav'n's decrees controul?
And counsel him, who guides the boundless
whole?
Laws to their Sovereign, and their Maker,
give?
And his existence doubt by whom they live?
Know,

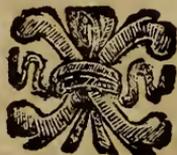
Know, thankless man, when worms indignant swell,
 As hardly us'd, it shews them us'd too well.
 Take chearfully the lot, forecast, as best,
 And patience will deliver thee to rest:
 Purg'd by afflictions, and by time approv'd,
 Death will instruct thee fully, whom I lov'd;
 But, if unhumbled still, thou dar'st my frown,
 The bolt uplifted, hangs to crush thee down.

A Thought at Waking.

THAT Morning too will dawn, when
 I shall rise
 Fresh from my dust, and, soaring, seek the
 skies.
 Then, why should I lament that Night draws
 on;
 And, tir'd, refuse to lay my burthen down?
 Tho', others more, yet I enough have seen,
 And guess what is to be, by what hath been.
 And, since my youthful days now almost past,
 Have pleas'd so little, welcome thou my last.
 'Tis the least care, of all that fill this head,
 What men design when I am sto'ln to bed.
 Closing my eyes, the world I now enclose,
 And fancy, waking, murders my repose;
 But in the grave, the house of rich, and poor,
 Fast I shall sleep, and dream of life no more.

LIFE made Agreeable.

SE'ST thou yon sunny spot of rising
 ground?
 How bright it looks amid the shade around!
 Just opposite, a shining clift on high,
 Transmits the glories of the upper sky:
 Such is the good man's life, so shines his way,
 Befriended by religion's chearful ray;
 While guilty wretches sit in death's cold
 shade,
 And clouds, with tempests charg'd, low'r
 o'er their head;
 On him descends a constant stream of light,
 Which gildseach common object to his sight;
 Calm passions, joyous hopes, a mind serene,
 Make all without to smile like all within;
 Pleasures from ev'ry soil spontaneous rise,
 And what is gloom to others, charms his eyes.
 So when his beams the Sun on nature throws,
 He stamps the beauteous colours which he
 shews.



To Mrs. S I N G E R,

Occasioned by a Copy of her Verses on DEATH.

ATTEND thou awful monarch of the
grave,
And calmly hear a wretch thy pity crave.
Amaz'd I've seen thee over-run mankind,
Nassau, immortal thought, in fetters bind.
Greatness, and hoary fame thy call obey,
And, if thou frown, sink with a swift decay.
To stop thy progress and the field maintain,
Life still attempts, but still attempts in vain.
Let death approach; the daunted soul re-
tires;
Extinguish'd are at once those vital fires
That mov'd the earthy lump, now left for-
lorn,
A breathless corpse, thy triumphs to adorn.
O spare thy conquest over me unknown,
Who need not feel thy power that power to
own!
Go; let the fearless hero try thy rage,
And pamper'd Prelates at their feasts ingage;
Between the miser and his hoards divide,
And snatch the lover from his fair one's side;
Such acts thy empire will aloud proclaim,
And the survivors bless, or dread, thy name.
For

For me ; believe the slave, 'twill scarce be said,
 When I expire, the poor *Philander's* dead !
 But 'twill not be ; my life I must resign,
 That life, which might I save, I'd not repine }
 To give thee up the whole Creation, were }
 it mine.

'Twas thus, with penfive soul, and frighted
 look,

By coward nature taught, *Philander* spoke ;
 With horror then revolv'd, and silent dread,
 The fatal moment that should speak him dead.
 O had th' all-conqu'ring tyrant then appear'd,
 Aim'd the dire stroke, and urg'd the fate he
 fear'd !

How dreadful had the meagre phantom been !
 How doubly terrible his shape, and mien !

Struck with the sight the Youth had inly
 groan'd,

And, rent from life, the sad divorce bemoan'd,
 Wrestling with fate, and struggling hard in
 death,

With strong convulsive throws h'ad giv'n his
 parting breath.

But the Almighty, kinder than his fears,
 Delay'd the stroke, propitious to his prayers,
 And singling, from the myriads round his
 throne,

One of the gentlest spirits, sent him down,
 To reconcile the shepherd to his fate,
 And ease his anxious doubts about an after
 state.

The charming SINGER'S Voice and Form
and Air

He feigns, and personates so well the Fair,
Deceiv'd I thought the very Nymph was
there.

A Saint she seem'd new risen to the skies,
I gaz'd, unable to remove my eyes
Till she recall'd my Soul, and bid me view
The mystic scene her ready pencil drew.
Here *Death* I saw, not that wan, ghastly shade,
By guilt and melancholy fancy made,
Of aspect stern, deform'd all o'er, and blind,
But soft, and blooming fair, and wond'rous
kind,

Down by his side a golden quiver hung,
Full was the quiver, nor his bow unstrung.
A golden shaft he chose; 'twas tip'd with love,
" This to the man, he cried, most dear to
heaven above : "

Then twang'd his bow, away the well-aim'd
dart

Flew swift as thought, and pierc'd the fa-
vourite's heart,

A sudden night involv'd his closing eyes,
And the glad Soul dismiss'd, sought out her
kindred skies.

Not distant far I spy'd a spacious cave,
The passage steep and gloomy, call'd the
grave ;

Disfmal it seem'd, but after short descent,
Open'd into a plain of vast extent,

Where happy minds, from clay unfetter'd, rove,
 Verdent the fields beneath, the skies serene
 above;
 Nor summer's drought, nor wintry cold
 are there,
 No lazy mists to clog the purer air;
 Broad streams of bliss, from living springs
 supply'd,
 In smooth majestic currents gently glide;
 Along the banks the forms of angels throng,
 And hymns divine are heard; the rapturous
 song
 Begins before the birth of Time and Place,
 Inquires who fill'd ev'n then th' unfathom'd
 Space,
 Of his orig'nal glories wondring tells,
 And how embosom'd in himself he dwells,
 Himself a Universe; from thence the song
 To the Creation falls, and flows along,
 Circling with Providence, till with that it
 drown
 In vast Eternity, from whence it first begun.

Delightful World! Did we but know how
 blest
 Are all the virtuous minds of thee possess'd,
 Like *Philomela*, unattach'd to sense,
 We then should welcome Death that call'd
 us hence,
 Impatient fly into his icy arms,
 And breathe our Souls away amidst his killing
 charms.

HYMN for the MORNING.

I.

AT Nature's birth, when on the Deep
 Darknes and horror lay,
 Let there be Light, th' Almighty said,
 And strait sprung forth the Day.

II.

This thy first blessing, to the world
 The Sun revolving brings;
 And smiling comfort visits man,
 Borne on the Morning's wings.

III.

Nature, imperfect, and undrest,
 Abhor'd the prying Light:
 A world of beauteous objects now
 Each Morn reveals to fight.

IV.

Sweet is the Light, and bright the Sun
 When he begins his race;
 But neither Sun, nor Light is sweet,
 If thou conceal thy face!

V.

The Day advances, Morning flies,
 And blazing Noon comes on
 In vain, while I, in Darknes hid,
 Lament my absent Sun.

VI.

Speak, Lord, and to thy Servant's Soul
 Thy quickening beams restore:
 The Light with double lustre shines
 When Darkness goes before.

For the EVENING.

I.

FATHER of Lights, the Day is thine,
 Thy hand its beams hath spread;
 And, high in glory thron'd thy self,
 Thou draw'st the Ev'ning shade.

II.

The springing Day invites my song,
 The same its grateful close,
 To praise the sweet vicissitude
 Of labour, and repose.

III.

Its beauty if the Morning boast,
 If the whole Day its light;
 Silence and Rest, the foes of care,
 Commend the sheltering Night.

IV.

Thus all the quiet of this world
 Agrees with Darkness best;
 Unlike the Peace that reigns above,
 And in the pious breast.

V. The

V.

The good man's Conscience, like his God,
 In Light doth always dwell;
 And what his Peace, his Calm, his Rest,
 Not he himself can tell.

VI.

His Soul beneath thy care, O Lord,
 No anxious passion knows;
 In drought his cooling stream thou art,
 When weary his repose.

GOD *the* CREATOR.

I.

O Lord, how excellent thy Name!
 How glorious to behold;
 Engraven fair on all thy works
 In characters of gold!

II.

On Heaven's unmeasurable face,
 In lines immensely great,
 In small, on every leaf and flower
 Creator God is writ.

III.

Tho' Reason be not given to all,
 Nor voice to thee, O Sun;
 Their Maker all proclaim, and here
 Their language is but one.

IV.

From land to land, and world to world,
 Thy fame is eccho'd round;
 And ages, as they pass, transmit
 The never-dying sound.

V.

Angels, the eldest Sons of light,
 Began the lofty song;
 They saw the Heavens unfurl'd abroad,
 And Earth on Nothing hung.

VI.

Then Man the last and noblest piece
 Of all this nether frame,
 With the first vital breath he drew
 Confest from whence he came.

VII.

And thou, my Soul, what wilt thou do
 To speak thy Former's praise?
 Harmonious hymns, and raptures high,
 Thy Theme and Thee should raise.



GOD *the* PRESERVER.

I.

BEFORE the Lord our Maker we
 With reverent awe should bow ;
 Thou, Lord, the Maker art of all,
 And their Preserver Thou.

II.

The Being which thy power bestow'd
 Thy Providence maintains,
 And the whole mass of things is held
 By strong tho' secret chains.

III.

The starry hosts in order move,
 Observant of their bounds ;
 And every Year and every Day
 The Sun repeats his rounds,

IV.

Thro' pathless skies he finds his road,
 Bent of himself to stray,
 For God directs his steady course
 Along the doubtful way.

V.

Nor less in things that subject lie
 To Time's all-conqu'ring power,
 Are thy eternal laws fulfill'd
 By every short-liv'd hour.

VI.

While generations rise and fall,
 Immortal is the race :
 And Time may shift the fading scenes,
 But not the Earth displace.

VII.

What Winter's withering breath destroys
 The following Spring supplies ;
 And Age, in vigorous Youth renew'd,
 Beholds itself and dies.

VIII.

The Life by Thee preserv'd, my God,
 Shall all be spent for Thee,
 And flowing bear thy praise along
 Into Eternity.

The SOUL'S Ascent.

I.

WHEN I behold the Morning Lark
 Begin her towering flight,
 And hear her music, as she mounts,
 Now less and less in fight,

II.

O that I had but wings, I cry,
 Soon would I leave the ground,
 See the world lessening to my view
 Till it no more were found!

III. Tem-

III.

Tempests should rage beneath my feet,
And clouds and vapours fly,
While imitating Angel's songs,
I pierc'd a calmer sky.

IV.

Transported with unknown delight,
I should this Being scorn ;
Forget from whence my humble birth,
And never more return.

V.

Thus from the bands of flesh enlarg'd,
My Soul will nobly rise,
With nothing but her in-born strength
To bear her to the skies.

VI.

Till then, Lord, lend her faith and love,
And with expanded wings
She to thy Throne her flight will aim,
And to celestial things.



The DIVINE IMMENSITY.*An* O D E.

I.

O Thou Supreme Eternal Mind,
 Who rul'st the fates of human
 To thy all-penetrating eye, [kind,
 The depths of Earth, and Sea, and heavenly
 [heights,
 Where Monsters creep, or Angels wing their
 [flights,
 Are all reveal'd; for in thy spacious hand
 [they lie!

II.

Forgive thy Creature who aspir'd,
 With pride of Reason madly fir'd,
 Reason which thou hadst just bestow'd,
 With swelling thought the utmost bound to
 [gain
 Of boundless Excellence; Enquiry vain!
 Yet pleas'd, discovers none can fill his heart but
 [God!

III.

When all things in th' unreal deep
 Of night and silence, lay asleep,
 Thou hadst eternal Ages seen:
 The narrow stint of planetary rounds
 Suits not thy Being; and, beyond the bounds
 Of Place, thy Essence overflows the vast Inane.

IV. This

IV.

This wide stretch'd Universe in Thee
 Fares like an Atom in the Sea;
 Nor bank nor bottom can be found:
 Like dust we on thy bosom careless float,
 Or overset by some unequal thought,
 We lose ourselves, absorb'd in the abyss
 [profound.

V.

The pathless Sea from shore to shore
 A sailing Dust may measure o'er,
 And cast on lands forget to roam;
 But should we with the swiftness of a ray
 Millions of years thro' thy expansion stray,
 Still an untravell'd Infinite would be to come.

VI.

Thy Attributes, a sum untold,
 Resemble lamps of burnish'd gold
 Hung all around the vaulted sky;
 Or rather like ubiquitary light,
 Which thro' all places spread, in all is bright,
 A lustre they diffuse thro' dark Immensity.

VII.

Thrice happy who enjoy the grace
 To see the beauties of thy face,
 Nor suffer from their love of change!
 Still as they higher climb, new scenes arise,
 The prospect widening still, dilates their joys,
 And still from world to world, all worlds of
 [bliss, they range.

VIII. But

VIII.

But how shall Souls that dwell below,
 In flesh confin'd, thy Presence know,
 Invisible to mortal eye?

To these, when pure, thou dost thy self reveal,
 Thy Spirit's vital energy they feel,
 And secret whispers tell them thou art ever
 [nigh.

IX.

This slender Altar, Lord, I raise,
 Compos'd of Wonder, to thy praise;
 Accept what gratitude demands.

Amidst Earth's blended tongues, with th'
 [Ocean's roar,
 'Midst countless multitudes who Thee adore,
 Thou hear'st my feeble voice, and se'st my
 [lifted hands.



III.

Let me remember too, with what surprize
 The sudden dimness vail'd mine eyes.
 How sickly and how pale the light,
 When Death's impending shade,
 Prefage of everlasting night,
 Had round involv'd my head!
 To Heav'n my languid looks I turn'd,
 Nor long my state unpitied mourn'd
 Celestial Effluence purg'd the gloom away,
 And to my fainting eyes restor'd the day:
 Therefore for Thee, my God, these orbs shall
 [roll,
 And to thy radiant Seat I'll dart, thro' them,
 [my Soul.

IV.

Think, flutt'ring Heart, when on the
 [steep
 Of that tremendous boundless deep
 Eternity, in sad suspence I stood,
 How all my trifling hopes and fears,
 My senseless joys, and idle tears,
 Vanish'd at prospect of the frightful flood!

V. Sure,

V.

Sure, Life is but a huddled dream,
 And Time a swift, deceitful stream,
 This vain world a shining bubble,
 Only full of care and trouble :
 Yet this, great God, this is the prize,
 For which deluded mortals Heaven despise ;
 Blinded with passion after this they run,
 And see not, 'till they see themselves undone !

VI.

Lord, when thy hand the sable curtain drew,
 And future worlds disclos'd to view,
 These were my thoughts ; and such are
 [still
 The lessons of the grave ;
 But as the purple channels fill,
 We gayer fancies have ;
 The world its former charms puts on,
 And we to doat again are won.
 But, rather than this shameful chase repeat,
 And grossly suffer, having seen the cheat ;
 A stranger let me live to fatal ease,
 That greatness may not tempt, wealth shine,
 [nor flattery please !

VII. Rais'd

VII.

Rais'd from my bed, I'll higher rise,
 And, springing upward, make the skies,
 Nor shall this load of flesh retard my flight :
 So, when the Eagle's Youth returns,
 With thirst of bold attempts he burns,
 Effays his wings, and tow'ring mocks the fight.

VIII.

All my past follies be forgot,
 Lost in one universal blot :
 From this Æra Years begin
 Happy, and unstain'd with sin ;
 And as if life did now commence,
 And Nature's beauties, now first struck my
 Transported let me sing from whom I came, [sense,
 Admire his works, and praise the faultless [frame.
 [frame.

IX.

My Soul, thou Source of life, with health in-
 [spire,
 And actuate it with thy fire ;
 Let all its pow'rs partake the heat
 Imparted by thy love,
 In all a heav'nly vigour beat
 Its every spring to move.

XII.

Wisely the blessing use thou must resign;
 The blessing will not long be thine;
 Prepare, my Soul, for thy remove
 From this poor shed of clay,
 To seats of fadeless bliss above,
 And ever-during day.

Death shews not there his meagre face,
 And guilt's a stranger to the place.
 No annals to record, as here, the time,
 The bless'd preserve; but ever in their prime,
 Let countless ages glide away untold,
 Which witness, as they pass, to joys that ne'er
 [grow old.

A H Y M N.

I.

WHILE Seraphs round thy glorious
 Throne
 In holy raptures burn,
 In lands of drought and shades of death,
 Thy absence, Lord, I mourn.

II. The

II.

The subject of their songs they view,
 This elevates them high ;
 O were my sight but blest as theirs,
 With theirs my songs should vie.

III.

But ah, while oft to Heav'n I look,
 And longing seek thee there,
 My eyes with expectation fail,
 And I almost despair.

IV.

Yet cease I not to praise my God,
 Whose mercy cheers my days,
 And thro' a vale of guilt and tears,
 Untouch'd, my Soul conveys.

V.

While I with worlds of light above
 Compare our changing spot,
 Scarce can my restless heart forbear
 Repining at its lot.

VI.

But 'tis enough that Heav'n's my Home,
 And th' Earth while passing thro',
 Tho' trackless spaces lie between,
 My Home I have in view.

VII.

The shining portal fight surveys,
 Faith boldly enters in,
 And tak's possession for my Soul
 Releas'd by Death from Sin.

A H Y M N.

I.

THEE, glorious God, whom none can see
 Yet all mankind must own,
 Our hearts acknowledge, and to Thee
 We speak in ev'ry groan.

II.

Our Souls confin'd to darksome clay,
 A sad and heavy load,
 'Midst fogs of sense mistake their way
 To Thee, their sov'reign good.

III.

We travel thro' this world of sin,
 As o'er enchanted ground,
 Following the fond delusive scene
 'Till in perdition drown'd.

IV. Heav'n

IV.

Heav'n warns us of the dang'rous road,
 And would our steps recal,
 But we must tread where crowds have trod,
 And where they fell we fall.

V.

Great God, dissolve the dreadful spell,
 Which does our Reason blind,
 That rescu'd from the gates of hell,
 We thy abode may find.

An E P I T A P H

*On a young Lady who died in her Twenty
 First Year.*

GRIEV'D to behold in Youth's en-
 chanting bloom,
 Her lovely charge descend into the tomb,
 " And is it thus, afflicted VIRTUE cries,
 " That Heav'n distinguishes the early wise?
 " Thus crowns the tender Parents watchful
 care? "

Celestial PIETY, her Sister fair,

With

With accents mild, and looks serenely bright,
That scatter'd all the horrors of the Night,
Reply'd—" Cease thou their happy lot to
mourn,

" Who never more from rest to toil return:

" Thy Pupils who to things unseen aspire,

" And endless joys, struck by my sacred fire,

" Their task fulfill'd, lay down this mortal
load :

" They cannot die too young who live to
God."

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